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SEATONIAN POEMS.

SEATONIAN POEMS.

BY THE
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TO

THE LORD BISHOP OF CHICHESTER,

These Seatonian Poems

ARE,

IN TOKEN OF

VENERATION OF HIS CHARACTER AND OFFICE,

AND OF THANKFULNESS

FOR HIS MANY LABOURS,

BY PERMISSION,

DEDICATED.

PREFACE.

It need hardly be said that, in writing, one by one, the following Poems, I never had the most distant idea of collecting them into a volume.

The publisher, however, finding that they were enquired for, not only at the time of their appearance, but some years after, requested me to allow their republication in a collected form.

Even so, I was unwilling to sanction a reprint which can have interest for so very few: but the offer on condition of their republication, of help to a work of charity, in which I am dearly interested, overcame my repugnance.

I have since had cause to be thankful that I gave way; in that I have thus been allowed to dedicate these Seatonians to my Bishop.

Melchior Barlæus, at the end of his *Myrmecostrategia*, a poem of 322 lines, writes: *Die uno lusit Patavii*, xxi *Aprilis*, 1564; let us hope as an excuse rather than a boast. Certainly it is for the former reason I mention, that the SINAI of these Seatonians was commenced in the morning, and the fair copy completed in the evening, of one and the same day.

SACKVILLE COLLEGE,
Whitsun-Monday, 1864.

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THE LOOSING OF THE EUPHRATEAN ANGELS.

1845.

THE LOOSING OF THE EUPHRATEAN ANGELS.

I.

ONCE more farewell! The sunset ray
Is glittering on the tropic bay:
Its waves are glorious to behold,
With crests of crimson and of gold:
But glow, by passing Zephyrs kiss'd,
At distance like an amethyst.
And clouds of brightness o'er them glance,
As 'twere in mystic fairy dance,
And with celestial fingers weave
A coronet for parting Eve
Of wildly purple light:

* The following Poem is grounded on the commonly received hypothesis, that by the *four Angels* are signified the four principal Sultanies of the Saracenic empire, which, having been "bound" by the Crusades, were "loosed," and permitted to extend themselves after the fall of the Latin Dominion in Palestine, and the ruin of Constantinople.

It comes! it comes! that matchless glow
On heaven above, and earth below,
Which brightest dream can never know
Till Fancy yields to sight!

II.

Lo! through the deepening twilight, peep
On heaven's serene and azure deep,
The shining squadrons of the sky,
That never beam on northern eye:
Canopus, like imperial gem
On night's eternal diadem,
And nameless constellations rise
That vie with England's winter skies,
And half replace their loss:
But chief, in perfect beauty drest,
Like conscious Empress of the rest,
The peerless Southern Cross.
Day lingers yet with rosy smile
Upon thy peaks, sweet mountain-isle!
Or calmly dies away:

Where once, through sunshine or through shower,
From break of morn till evening hour
My feet were wont to stray:
The dizzy bridge that spann'd the abyss,
The goat-path down the precipice,
The mountain-stream, I knew:
The peak in sunset purple deck'd,
The cloud on crag sublimely wreck'd,—
And mark'd the boundless sea reflect
The sky's intenser blue:
What time the thunder-cloud was spread
On Ruivo's crest of gloomy red,
And Arrieiros' mighty head
Shone out in evening-gold;
And modest twilight stole along
The needle ridge of sharp Cidrão,*
And sweet machete was mixed with song
In the dim 'Pilgrims' Fold.'
O lovelier far than tongue can tell,
Eternal mountains! fare ye well!

* Pico Ruivo, Pico dos Arrieiros, Pico do Cidrão—mountains in Madeira.

III.

Eternal! Strange and vain the word
Thus of terrestrial beauty heard!
E'en now it lingers not,—the day
When that magnificent array
Like morning clouds must pass away
And leave no trace behind:
Thus by its ruin giving birth
To those new Heav'ns and that new Earth,
The resting-place of Peace and Love,
The mansions promised from above
To ransom'd human-kind:
The day in types and signs foretold
By seers that prophesied of old;
A day of darkness and of woe,
Whose advent, angel may not know,
Nor man to man declare;
Thus taught to spend his hours below
In watching unto prayer:
Lest haply, coming like a thief,
That time of terror and of grief
Should take him unaware.

IV.

Yet not unheralded by fear
The End of all things shall draw near:
By portents, writ in heavenly lines,
By 'fearful sights and mighty signs.'
The blood-red moon shall walk no more
Her path of brightness, as before;
The ocean with unwonted roar,
And anguish'd moan, shall vex his shore,—
The sun be clad in black:
The heaven, and all its powers decay,
The constellations fade away;
And, as she hastens to her end,
Must Nature's suffering self portend
The universal rack.
So saith the vision from on high,
The 'more sure word of prophecy.'

V.

Such scenes, serene in faith the while,
On that Apocalyptic isle
The loved Apostle saw:

Elect and blest! To him alone
The future glory was made known,
The emerald rainbow round the Throne,
And GOD, their GOD, from Whom His own
Eternal comfort draw:
The sea of glass, serenely fair,
The thousand times ten thousand there
That worship day and night:
What time, in mystic vision set,
He viewed the things that were not yet:
And thence, with piercing sight,
To earth her future fate reveals
In the dread Loosing of the Seals!

VI.

'Tis done! A sevenfold Angel-band
Take golden trumpets in their hand,
And there, the Eternal Throne around,
Each hath prepared himself to sound.—
The first shrill blast!* And issuing forth
From the cold regions of the North,

* Rev. viii. 7.

With flinty hearts, and wild blue eyes,
And dissonance of barbarous cries,
Germanic myriads, pour'd
On the sweet land of corn and wine,
Athwart the pathless Apennine,
The mountain-torrent ford:
On, on they sweep with whirlwind-sway,
Through steel and fire and death obey
The bidding of their lord:
And Roman legions shrink and quail,
And vain the trust in lance and mail
And well-attemper'd sword:
Wake, Rome, O wake! 'Tis all too late!
The Goth, the Goth is at thy gate!
Maiden and veteran, babe and sire,
Have known 'the mingled hail* and fire'
Of that barbarian horde.

VII.

Another blast! With dauntless breast
The conqueror hastens to the West:

* Rev. viii. 7.

O'er prostrate realms and kings he trod,
—Dark Attila, the Scourge of God!
Anguish, and rapine, and dismay
Attend the victor's reddening way:
On Rome's imperial ocean came
A mighty mount,* that blazed with flame:
Amidst that troubled sea it glowed,
And the changed billow foam'd with blood.
Another woe is past:
And yet it slumbereth not, the sword
That works the Vengeance of the Lord:
And dreader fury is outpour'd
With each succeeding blast.
And still the Angel-voice we know
Proclaiming sadly, Woe! Woe! Woe!

VIII.

From the land of the spice-tree, the land of the palm,
Where founts scatter freshness, and flowers breathe balm,
Where the breeze, as it travels the greenwood, brings
A thousand sweets on his silken wings,

* Rev. viii. 8.

And the sky hath no cloud, and the fair earth smiles
In the lovely array of the Fortunate Isles;
Where at twilight, beside the shady well,
You may catch the chime of the camel's-bell;
And the hill and the dale are fair to see
With the glossy green of the coffee-tree:
From the land, on whose happy confines press
The fearful realms of the wilderness,
With its blistering heat, and its fierce white glare,
And the fire of its sun, and the drought of its air;
Where from close of twilight till blush of morn,
Led forth by the strains of the clarion and horn,
They journey right onward,—the pilgrim array,—
For the "Ship of the Desert" can teach them the way:
—From Araby's country, the far East's boast,
The great False Prophet goes out with his host!

IX.

They gather! they thicken! on, on, they pour!
'Tis a land as the Garden of Eden* before:
Ye may mark their track as they onward press,—
'Tis a blighted and desolate wilderness:

* Joel ii. 3.

They ford the river, they scale the bank,
They stumble not in their serried rank,
They laugh at pity, they mock at fear,
They scorn the shaking of sword and spear;
And the tramp of their horse is as dread and as loud
As the burst of a mountain thunder-cloud;
And the mail of their horsemen as thick to the eye
As the locust-swarm of an Afric sky;
And the gold-deck'd turban is seen afar,
And ye know the flash of the scymetar:
Their prince Abaddon* hath well his name,
For ruin and havock is all their aim:
And men, as they view that onward tide,
Shall pant for death as for plighted bride!

X.

And hark! for the camp and the battle-hour,
The dread seducer hath words of power:
"They that shall fall in march or fight,
Are called by Allah to realms of light:
Where in giant pearls the Houris dwell,
And reach to the faithful the wine-red shell:

* Rev. viii. 11.

With their words so sweet, and their forms so fair,
Their gazelle-like eyes, and their raven hair:
Where the raptured ear may drink its fill
Of the heavenly music of Izrahil:
And Tuba, next Allah's throne on high,
Owes gladness and Immortality.
One sight of that Paradise well repays
Long nights of watching and weary days:
And he that falls with his sword in hand
Shall wake at once in the promised land.
And monarch on monarch, and state on state,
Shall be conquer'd by Islam,—for Allah is great:
And the faithful shall gather the gold like dust,
And the gems like pebbles, for Allah is just:
And shall comfort His warriors, and wipe their tears,
In the endless repose of Eternity's years!"

XI.

Speed, speed the summons West and North!
Call each recruit and veteran forth!
Herald of woe! ere yet too late,
Haste for thy life across the strait!

Legate and Prefect, one and all,
Double the guards, and man the wall!
Where are the legions, Asia's boast,
Where Lycia's pride, and Phrygia's host?
Make one brave stand, hold firm one post,
The invaders are but men!
Be sons indeed of them that died
In trampling Carthaginian pride,
And forced Jugurtha's battle-tide
To his own wilds again!

XII.

On, on they roll! Ye might as well
Check with a sand-mound Ocean's swell,
As with pale foot and dastard horse,
Dream to oppose the invader's course!
Now in the desert,—now, elate,
He thunders at Damascus' gate;—
The queenly city falls:
And trumpets mix with shrieks of woe,
And streams of blood, like water, flow
In Antioch's purple halls.

Avoid that hour of hopeless grief:
Tiberias! hail the victor chief!
Fair Salem, once the earth's delight,
And precious in the Almighty's sight,
The irrevocable doom is spoke,
Prepare thee for the Othman yoke!
—And still, in unopposed advance,
The turban'd squadrons shake the lance:
Their's is the growth of Egypt's fields,
And trembling Alexandria yields
The riches of the main:
And sea-girt Carthage, she that erst
The Roman bands had well-nigh burst,
Stoops to the Moslem yoke accurst,
And wears the Prophet's chain!

XIII.

Oh, who may count the hopeless tears
That thick bedew the waste of years,
While, gathering strength and winning fame,
Westward and westward Islam came!

A traitor calls: with hope elate
They man the ships, they cross the strait:
And Calpe, from her beacon-brow,
Hath caught the nearing squadron now:
And Roderick, waked by battle-din
From dreams of pleasure and of sin,
Would fain avert, by one brave blow,
The trespass that hath wrought him woe,
And end, o'ermatch'd in bloody strife,
By noble death ignoble life.
And Lusitania weeps in chains,
And Ebro flows through captive plains,
And no deliverer nigh:
Save where, the seat of Christian throne,
Mountain Asturias holds her own;
And Gaul, with gladden'd eye,
Surveys the heaps of them that fell
Beneath the sword of stern Martel!

XIV.

Europe is up! from the cot to the throne
The summons that issued from Clermont is known:

The arrow they feather, the bow they shape,
From the snow-crown'd Alp to the Icy Cape:
There is donning of helmet in England and France,
There is girding of armour and whetting of lance:
The war-cry is loud, and the pennon is spread
From the Holy Island to Beachy Head:
They have taken the vow to be spent and to spend
From the cliffs of Dover to far Land's End:
And the knights of Normandy burnish the mail,
And the burghers of Calais equip the sail:
The yeoman comes down from the green hill-side;
The lover forsaketh the plighted bride;
And Kentish shepherds the sheephook spurn,
And the vines are untended in mountain Auvergne:
And brambles grow in the field apace,
And the deer is tame in the wildwood chase:
And the peasant hath shod his oxen twain
To serve for steeds in the warrior-train:
And farewells are spoken, and vows are made,
And prayers are breathed for the great Crusade.
For those Four Angels that dwell around
The streams of Euphrates must straitly be bound.

XV.

Like clouds, that in the April day
O'er hill and valley flit away,
And as the breeze goes by, the grass
Can show no traces where they pass,
So those rude bands, untaught to know
The wiles and onset of the foe,
Whose skill-less hand so lately took
The javelin for the pruning-hook,
Through Europe poured the stream amain
That never should return again.
The last fierce strife for life and death,
The failing hand, the gasping breath,
The dying shriek, the anguish fell,
Hungarian wolves, ye know right well;
Far, far from every loved one's reach
Their graveless bones are left to bleach;
And long the widow's heart shall beat
At every sound of entering feet,
Too fondly deeming him at hand
That moulders in Bohemian sand.

And long the sire, though weary now
Of trembling limb and wrinkled brow,
Shall call on Heaven with earnest cries
That still his son may close his eyes.
Few, few of many, shall behold
Santa Sophia's vaults of gold:
And fewer win their passage o'er
The love-famed strait to Asia's shore.

XVI.

But louder the tumult and braver the sight
Where the knighthood of Europe are trick'd for the fight:
With Godfrey of Boulogne and Fulke of Anjou
And Robert of Normandy, "tender and true":
And the banners wave and the clarions peal,
And the host, as it moves, is one glare of steel:
They know not of doubt, and they dream not of flight,
For their faces are set like a rock for the fight:
And the coward Cæsar grows pale afar,
And his trembling courtiers the straits would bar:

But who shall gainsay them? but who may deny
A passage to those that will force it or die?
Through Asia they sweep in their terrible might;
On the plains of Nicæa they muster for fight:
They circle Antioch with mound and fosse,
And the Crescent is humbled beneath the Cross:
And thinn'd in numbers, but glad of soul,
They stand at length at their journey's goal!

XVII.

Fit theme of high emprise for thee,
Bard of romance and chivalry!
How first that band, with joyful awe,
Afar the Holy City saw:
How minaret and dome and spire
Glow'd in the parting sunbeam's fire:
Mingling that wondrous tale the while
With knightly gest and wizard's guile.
How, when the hard-fought day was o'er,
And Salem own'd the Cross once more,
They bade Duke Godfrey take the helm,
And guide the tempest-troubled realm:

But where his Suffering LORD had worn
The Crown inwove with twisted Thorn,
He would not,—humble chief as bold,—
Put on the diadem of gold.

XVIII.

Alas! far other theme is ours:
We have the thorns, and he the flowers:
'Tis ours to trace, in mournful line,
The fated kingdom's slow decline:
How with his sires the monarch slept,
And Salem o'er his ashes wept:
And year by year, and day by day,
Resolve and courage died away:
And civil feuds wax'd fierce and high,
And friends were far, and foemen nigh;
And Christian knights dishonour'd troth,
And monarchs swerved from plighted oath;
And midst the invader's battle-cry
There came the sound of revelry;
And Moslem-conquerors round the few
In ever-narrowing circle drew.—

Still, mindful of her brethren's cause,
Her sword avenging Europe draws:
She sent the noble and the brave
To victory,—and they found a grave!

XIX.

Waken the trump! Bid alarm-bells ring out!
Speed forth the herald! make ready the scout!
Galleys of Pisa! strain yard and bend mast!
Stout be the oarsmen and steady the blast!
Pass ye the tidings by pen and by mouth,—
Saladin, Saladin comes from the South!
Troops he hath victuall'd, forced marches he makes:
Quarter in battle he gives not nor takes:
Lo! 'tis his herald that biddeth King Guy
Look to his palace, for ruin is nigh!
He hath sworn by the Black Stone of Mecca to rest
When abased is the pride of fair Galilee's crest:
When the Templars' fierce lances have melted away,
As the wind drives the leaves on November's dim day:
When the wealth of the burghers is pillaged and gone,
And Palestine knows not the Knights of Saint John:

When Salem hath bow'd to the Crescent again,
And her king is his captive,—but never till then!

XX.

At Sephoris they make their stand,
The bulwarks of the threaten'd land:
There Arnauld, shame of Christian knights,
There Raoul of the thousand fights;
There, false of heart, in vauntings high,
The traitor-Count of Tripoli;
Props of the state, the Orders twain
Have sent their brethren to the plain:
And forced at last to meet the foe,
King Guy stakes all on that one throw.
No needed rest,—no truce from arms:
The night is wild with fresh alarms:
And evermore, with battle-shout,
The Turcopules are up and out.
Oh! for one drop of water now
For the parch'd throat and burning brow!
At eve the dread sirocco came
To fan the desert into flame:

No shadows slake that heat intense,
No evening-dews their balm dispense:
And windward fires blazed high and bright,
With demon-art, the livelong night:
And many a yeoman sigh'd in vain
For England's splashing streams again:
And many a knight, with eager eye,
Caught the first reddening of the sky,
Presaging with its mournful glow
A redder battle-field below!

XXI.

But why pursue, in gloomy strain,
The havock of Tiberias' plain,
And bid its memory wake?
Was the prophetic voice in vain
That from the Altar spake?
Loose the Four Angels, said that sound,
That yet, in dread Euphrates bound,
Their mystic chain obey:

Avenging spirits, that have power
A year,* a month, a day, an hour,
The third of men to slay.

XXII.

'Tis a fair spring morning! The breeze is high,
The clouds flit fast through the bright blue sky;
And the voice of the trumpet sinks and swells
O'er the purple waves of the Dardanelles:
And Moslem cries on the gale are borne
From the Seven fair Towers to the Golden Horn:
And clarions echo and cannons roar
From the Grecian walls to the Lycian shore;
For by Othman bands, at their Lord's behest,
The Cæsar's City is hardly press'd.
And the strong man totters with hunger now,
And the mother weeps o'er her child's cold brow:
And Prince and burgher are full of woe,
For famine hath come to aid the foe.
But tidings are spread from gate to gate,—
"Five Christian galleys are off the strait!"

* Rev. ix. 14.

With countless myriads the walls are lined
That gaze on the billows and watch the wind:
For steadily onward they win their way,
And their prows are white with the snowy spray:
They near the harbour, they cross the bar,
And their cannon sweep the waves afar:
In vain shall the fleet, like a crescent, spread
From fair Chalcedon to Pera's head:
In vain shall the Moslem tyrant chafe:
The harbour is won, and the City is safe!
'Twas the last brave deed of a falling land:
The LORD hath spoken, and who shall withstand?

XXIII.

More glorious then, with kingly mien,
The Palæologus was seen
In that sad night, when hope was gone,
And his last morn was drawing on,
Than that Imperial line, so long
Renown'd in history and in song,
The memory of whose ancient sway,
In few brief hours must pass away.

At midnight held they council high
How best like Christian chiefs to die:
How the great Empire, sinking fast,
Most gloriously should end at last.
For all that night, by torch and lamp,
They labour in the invader's camp:
They level mound, they fill ravine,
The ladder plant, and pile fascine,
And fourscore galleys, moor'd at hand,
Threaten, with lofty prow, the strand.
The Cæsar joins in rites Divine,
Eternal Wisdom! in Thy shrine:
And pardon from his vassals takes,
And mans each post,—for morning breaks:
And then, with all untroubled eye,
Leaving his halls, goes forth to die.

XXIV.

The hour is come! the war-cries wake:
By sea and land assault they make:
And cannons roar, and bastions shake,
And arrows shower like rain:

And, careless of the heaps that fall,
They hurry onwards towards the wall
The helpless peasant train,
Whose corpses soon shall form the way
By which their lord may reach his prey.
From morn till noon the fosse they fill:
The bridge of death grows higher still;
The Christian bands, with labouring breath,
Are faint and wearied in the death
Of such ignoble foes:
Till fresh and panting for the war,
With lance, and pike, and scymetar,
The Janizaries rose:
And pouring in resistless tide
Havock and ruin far and wide,
They whelm the city's hapless side,
And wall and battlement are dyed
With freshly welling gore:
To new attacks the chieftains call
With trumpet, drum, and atabal:
From line and galley, bridge and wall,
They thunder evermore.

The Cæsar flings away the robe
That once had sway o'er half the globe:
He finds the warrior's death he sought,
And, living while her monarch fought,
Rome and her sway are o'er.

XXV.

Seal up the vision! Empires must decay,
And monarchs, with their people, pass away:
And conquerors on the paths of victory press,
And fruitful lands become a wilderness;
Resistless nations rise from realms unknown,
The mighty fail, the slave ascend the throne:
But all, as history's opening leaves unfold,
Fulfil the doom the Eternal spake of old:
Until, redeem'd and purified from sin,
The fulness of the Gentiles shall come in,
And that Archangel's voice from shore to shore
Proclaims in thunder, Time shall be no more;
And they that sleep shall hear the trumpet's call,
And Heaven rejoice, and GOD be All in all!

EDOM.

1849.

EDOM.

I.

As Autumn-clouds, when day is almost done,
Crowd from the West, in gloomy splendour dyed,
And rear a death-pavilion for the sun,
With purpler radiance clothing mountain-side,
And flinging ghastlier hues on ocean's tide;
While the great forest moans, for far and near
The fitful breezes strip her summer pride;
Wilder the sky, the landscape grows more drear,
And Nature stands in awe, and men's hearts fail for fear:

II.

So Earth hath reached her evening. Even now
The shadows of her night are closing round;
The dimmed crown trembles on the kingly brow,
Imperial cities totter to the ground,
And all the Powers of Darkness are unbound;
For hearts held truest, rights deemed holiest erst,
Weighed in the balances, are wanting found;
And Faith like chaff before the storm dispersed,
And laws of God are scorned, and human ties are burst.

III.

Spirit of Truth, Who knowest all our fears!
Prophetic light amidst the gloom display,
To Whom one day is as a thousand years,
To Whom a thousand years are as one day;
By Whose unerring torch, in far survey,
The future woes Thy holy seers have kenned,
That war, and warlike rumours, and array
Of nation against nation, shall portend:
These things must come to pass, and then shall be the end.

IV.

O for a vision of the latter time
Like that which on the Apostate Prophet came!
When, left of GOD, on Peor's heights sublime
He stood beside the sacrificial flame;
And, bearing each its annals and its name,
The shades of coming empires flitted past;
He marked their waxing and their waning fame,
He saw the sceptres quail, the thrones downcast,
And His dominion rise, which only is to last.

V.

But 'tis not ours to turn the future page,
The page concealed from all, save only One;
Enough, 'mid records of historic age,
To read how He hath said, and how 'twas done:
O Queen of many waters, how thy Throne
Was meted with destruction's utmost line,
And that a desert which was Babylon;
How Ninus' towers have felt the doom divine;
How, Edom's sovereign once, imperial Petra, thine!

VI.

Never, no nevermore, O Teman's pride,
Amidst thy streets shall sound the voice of glee;
Never the voice of bridegroom and of bride,
Never the tabret and the minstrelsy;
Never the wayfarer at nightfall see
The taper's gleam, the fire-light's friendly show;
The solitary eagle over thee
Poises, in evening splendour all a-glow,
And from his watch-tower marks destruction's realm
below.

VII.

Never,* thou giant of the days of old,
The sons of men shall haunt thy homes again;
Nor shall the shepherd near thee pitch his fold,
Nor shall th' Arabian harbour on thy plain;
But doleful creatures there shall have domain,
The vulture's shriek resound, the jackal's cry;
The adder and the scorpion there shall reign:
Such, in th' eternal record writ on high,
Was Idumea's fate, the doom of Prophecy!

* Isaiah xxxiv. 10—17.

VIII.

——That old primæval dwelling! where the sun
Shot dimly down athwart the forest glade,
And the soft breezes, with the eve begun,
Sweet whispering in the palm-tree branches made;
And dark-haired maidens, when the light decayed,
Came with the pitcher to the brimming well,
Lingering, till thro' the brake the fire-flies played,
And o'er Judæa's far hill-country fell
The twilight's crimson haze, and night dissolved the spell.

IX.

Meet dwelling for a Patriarch! there each night
To Abraham's God his orisons ascended;
There, in the fragrance of the morning light,
With whispering leaves and wild-wood notes they blended;
There, too, each little knee in reverence bended,
At Isaac's bidding worshipped each twin-boy:
Then in the greenwood, those sweet matins ended,
Or in the sheepfold sought the known employ,
Beneath the hallowed shade of Beer-la-häi-roi.

X.

Methinks that in that springtide of the world,
Woods, hills, and valleys glowed more green and bright;
With lustier sap the vine's young tendril curled
Around the wedded elm; the morn was dight
With chains of brighter dewdrops, and the night
Kindled in lovelier tints the glowing West,
And moon and stars shed forth a purer light:
Meantime those two, in life's sweet opening blest,
In Mamre's shade abode, nor sought for other rest.

XI.

But oh, how far, from one same mountain pouring,
Twin streams at birth may speed their several way!
One through its rocky bed of torture roaring,
One gliding onward in its gentle play
Thro' sunny vales, and woods that breathe of May:
And those twin forms that in the forest vast
Together strayed, together knelt to pray,
Together sought their couch,—few years be past,—
Whose lot so widely thrown, so parted at the last?

XII.

O Sin, mysterious still, as when at first
Our Father stretched his hand, and ate, and fell;
In children and in children's children curst,
And flinging misery as by magic spell
O'er unborn generations!—who may tell
The terrors of that slighted day of grace,
When he, who soon shall know his loss too well,
Can for a late repentance find no place,
And bears the curse himself, and brands it on his race?

XIII.

'Tis done, the irrevocable deed!—And now,
Infatuate Esau, thou hast sinned away
Thy Birth-right's virtue! vain to smite the brow—
To wring the hands—to bend the knees—to pray
"Hast thou not yet a blessing?"—But to-day
The promise was thine own: now, vainly wise,
Thou seest thy glory uttermost decay;
For that the grace of God thou didst despise,
The Curse* shall haunt thee still with dry and tearless eyes.

* ἀρὰ Ξηροῖς ἀκλαύστοις ὄμμασιν προσιζάνει.
Sept. Cont. Theb. 696.

XIV.

Yes, it is gone, the land with honey flowing,
The goodly land!—it never can be thine;
The Holy City in God's glory glowing,
The Temple, filled with brightness all divine,
The Altar, that shall be Earth's central shrine,
The festal rites of each revolving year,
The glories of the Sacerdotal line:
Thy treasury is the sword, thine empire fear,
Thy desolate abode the mountain-peaks of Seir.

XV.

He sowed the seed of Sin; revolving years
Matured it into Death. As when the gale
On its light wings the seedling Upas bears,
And plants it, far from men, in Javan dale;
From earth and air its little leaves inhale
The venom of its race, in every shoot,
Until it loads with death the tainted vale;
So Esau's crime, that one primæval root,
In Edom, age by age, brought forth its bitter fruit.

XVI.

A morn of clouds and darkness! Near and nearer
Around God's City draws the dense array;
Chaldean trumpets sounding clear and clearer,
The requiem pour for Sion's fatal day;
Flashes from scimitar the clouded ray;
Echoes from crag and tower the trumpet's peal;
Assyria's cohorts hew their bloody way;
Judæa's chosen warriors faint and reel;
And shout responds to shout, and steel is clashed
on steel.

XVII.

The Temple glittering in its marble whiteness,
His heritage Whom Heaven can not contain,
That whilome flashed intolerable brightness
From holy Olivet to Ramah's plain,
Vain now its Ark, its dread Shechinah vain;
The Lord of Sabaoth hath forsook His Throne;
Around the brazen steps blood flows like rain;
The shriek of agony, the stifled groan,
Burst from the scattering flock that late He called
His own.

XVIII.

In flickering guise while yet the fire-wreaths played,
One sunbeam fell upon it,——'twas the last;
And lit up portico and colonnade,
And that fair roof that earthly skill surpassed,
And those twin glorious pillars, dim and vast;
Till gathering flames enwrapped it in their fold,
And from the fretted vaulting groin fell fast
The glittering dewdrops of the molten gold;
And, volumed deep and thick, the smoke-cloud o'er
it rolled.

XIX.

There, on the marble pavement, where of yore
The vast assembly knelt to keep the Feast;
Close to the Altar, where they laid before
The spoils of India and the further East,
They lie, the mail-clad Prince, the grey-hair'd Priest,
The mother, clasping still her clay-cold child;
And scarcely yet from earthly pangs released,
The maiden-form,—while that last terror wild
Still sits on her pale face, and tresses dust-defiled.

XX.

Then Idumæa's mailèd chiefs stood by,
And Teman's warriors ranged their cohorts round;
"Be Sion for a ruin!" was their cry;
"Down with it! Down with it unto the ground!"
And in the cross-ways* was the ambush found
To cut off Judah's remnant. Faint they came,
Wounded, and weak, and weary, with the sound
Yet in their ears of shout and rushing flame;
And 'scaped the foe to fall beneath a brother's aim.

XXI.

Woe to eternal anger! that can dare
Pursue its victim over land and tide,
That never ceases, never pauses, ne'er
Flags in its ardour, never turns aside,
By no fond prayers, no tears, is pacified,
Forgiveness laughs to scorn; and then gives o'er
When in the heart-blood of its foeman dyed:
Woe to the hate that Teman's people bore†
To Salem's chosen towers, the hate for evermore!

* "Neither shouldest thou have stood in the cross-way," &c. Obad. 14.

† "Because he did pursue his brother with the sword, and did cast off all pity. . . . I will send a fire upon Teman." Amos i. 11.

XXII.

And think'st thou not, proud Kingdom, that her God
Will visit for the wrath that time defies?
The city that was low beneath His rod
Shall once more lift her turrets to the skies;
The glory of the latter house shall rise
Beyond the former; yet on Sion's gate
The nations of the earth shall fix their eyes,
And Kings and Princes enter in with state,
Until the Monarch comes on Whom the world shall wait.

XXIII.

But thou, hear thou thy doom. Thus saith the Lord:
"O thou* that in the mountain-crags dost rest,
Vain is thy pride of dwelling,—vain the horde
In Seir's tall peaks that fix their eagle's nest;
Others with peace and plenty shall be blest,
In bondage and dishonour shalt thou bow,
By danger harassed, and by want distrest;
If all the Earth rejoice, yet shalt not thou,
Who bear'st for evermore Cain's mark upon thy brow."

* Jeremiah xlix. 12—18.

XXIV.

——A change is on the vision: far and wide
Idols have fall'n, and shrines are in decay;
From East to West they own the Crucified,
And the glad messengers of heavenly day
Go forth to preach His Name Who lives for aye;
They tell it to Arabia's happy gales,
And where the Dead Sea's sullen waters play;
And Idumea, in her thousand vales,
Reflects that Sun to whom the day-star's radiance pales.

XXV.

On Bosrah's heights the evening's glory falls;
The grey rock flushes; from the wilderness
The pilgrim marks the glow of Petra's walls,
Her palms that tower aloft in summer's dress,
Her fortress-crags, her marble terraces;
But chief in matchless splendor catch the eye
The temples, where in GOD's great Name they bless;
For many a dome, upswelling to the sky,
Speaks to the praise of Him That rules Eternity.

XXVI.

Aye, 'twas a glorious scene! what time the Eve
Drew her soft fairy veil athwart those piles;
As if that house of beauty loth to leave,
Departing yet, she decked in loveliest smiles
The fair mosaics, and the long-drawn aisles,
And flowery capitals, and jewels rare,
And ivory, carved in thousand curious wiles;
Where morn and night arose the chanted prayer
And hearts, inspired by Heaven, to Heaven ascended there.

XXVII.

Founded they were midst agony and fears,
When Hell call'd all her forces to th' attack,
Midst widows' lamentations, orphans' tears,
Midst the wild beasts, the scaffold, and the rack,
By men the cost that counted, nor looked back,
But through the Cross went onward to the Crown:
Whose courage failed them not, nor love grew slack,
Until, the Tyrant's malice trampled down,
They saw that LORD for Whom on Earth they won renown.

XXVIII.

May not their memories plead? and shall not all
The prayers, that like a cloud of incense rise,
The alms that like the dews of evening fall,
Prevail to avert the judgment of the skies?
Is He extreme to mark iniquities
Whose name is Loving-kindness? Shall He yet
Fix on that ancient deed avenging eyes,
And, in His seat of strictest justice set,
Remember Edom's sins, her deeds of love forget?

XXIX.

Themselves shall they deliver; and on high
With their great Lord accepted shall they stand;
Shall wear the garments of felicity,
And drink in heavenly joys at His right hand;
Companions now of that victorious band
Who wear the garland after perils sore:
But think not in thy pride, accursèd land,
That thou shalt profit by the toils they bore:
Thy sea of trouble rolls, though they have gained
the shore.

XXX.

Hark* to the savage uproar! where afar
Rome's veteran soldiers, trembling, loose the chain,
And, grating on strong hinges, draw the bar
Of those wild desert-fiends!—With flowing mane,
And blood-shot eyeballs, they that long have lain
In durance, sally with impetuous bound,
And glory in their strength, and scour the plain:
A fence of death to compass Edom round,
Another scourge of GOD for Seir's unholy ground.

XXXI.

——Again the vision changes. For with shout
And atabal and lance and scimitar
The apostate Prophet's hordes have issued out;
And in the swelling surge of Islam's war
Nor mountain-range nor desert-waste can bar
The warriors of the Crescent, as they go
Onward and onward still: till Edom's star,
Majestic Petra, lays her honours low;
At once forsakes her God, at once admits His foe.

* The *Chronicon Alexandrinum* informs us, that the Emperor Decius transported lions from Africa into Edom, to serve as a barrier against the incursions of the Saracens.

XXXII.

Yet still at even-tide the camel-bells
Come chiming up across the desert free;
And at the gate the gathering concourse swells
The riches of the entering train to see;
The precious tears of that bright Indian tree,
And coral, torn from deep Philippine bay,
And amethyst, and Candian ivory,
And gems, that in Golconda's mines once lay,
And woven air, that vests the maidens of Cathay.

XXXIII.

And riches grow and splendour; and it seems
As all in vain prophetic doom were writ;
And royal Petra, in her golden dreams,
Sees not before her feet the yawning pit;
The Lady of the desert doth she sit,
The arbitress of those twin seas;—the mart
Where all bright things of either world may flit,
All that may touch the eye or win the heart;
And who shall lay her low?—who bid her fame depart?

XXXIV.

O hard of heart to yield belief! shall He
On Whom the general powers of nature wait,
Who holds the elements in ministry,
While flame and cloud and tempest form the state
He takes, and billows swell to work the fate
His mouth shall speak, and lightnings speed intent;
Shall He lack means thy pride of heart to abate?
Is He a mortal that He should repent?
Shall He pass by the sin, and check the punishment?

XXXV.

——It were a glorious thing, if we might be
Admitted to the Palace of the Air;
It were a glorious sight, if we might see
The treasures hid in dread arrayal there,
Against the day when mercy shall not dare
To check the arm of justice; when on high
All fearful sights and mighty signs declare
The day of utter desolation nigh,
And hope becomes despair, and sorrow agony.

XXXVI.

Not such the power the Lord's right arm hath turned
Against thee now; a deadlier curse is thine—
An iron sky, with drought perpetual burned,
A heaven of brass. O land of corn and wine!
Henceforth thy doom is barrenness: the brine
Lies caked upon the desert, thick and hoar,
As early dew when Autumn's sun-beams shine:
Nor seek the cause, too deep for human lore;
He works the wonder now Who prophesied before.

XXXVII.

The sun is on the desert day by day,
The fierce Sirocco parches up the night,
The tall palms wither in the scorching ray,
The sand-waves kindle in intenser white:
Where once, the fainting traveller's delight,
The fountain threw its bubbling waters high,
And, scattering dew-gems round it pure and bright,
Went flashing forth beneath the summer's sky,
And reeds that whispered soft, and leaves made sweet
reply;

XXXVIII.

There is a barren glen whereon the heat
Smites with its fiercest radiance; bare and black
The crags frown o'er it, and when day-hues fleet,
Fling on the night-air dread reflection back:
Woe for the traveller on the desert-track
That hurrying thither, breathes his soul in prayer
One drop to find, his maddening thirst to slack;
What agony of heart, what dim despair,
As down he sinks, to meet his dread foreboding there!

XXXIX.

And hope and love and life are fading fast;
The strong man's nerve and pulse avail him not;
And still intenser breathes the fiery blast,
And vultures hover o'er the fated spot;
The lips are drawn; a few tears, thin and hot,
Course down the pallid cheek; the gasping sigh
Comes short and shorter; memory is forgot;
The hands' convulsive catch and glazing eye
Point to the conqueror, Death, and speak his coming nigh.

XL.

But still he sees—O vision fond yet sweet!—
The shady dell, the cattle by the pool,
The cold damp foot-falls of the fairies' feet
That print the grass in dewy evening cool:
Anon he dreams the tempest-clouds bear rule,
And the big drops are falling;—O that plash,
As strong desire turns Fancy to its fool!
'Tis now like pattering rain on oak or ash,
And now as when o'er crags dark Foyer's waters crash.

XLI.

Such mortal wastes environ Edom round,
Fed by no dews, by no cool breezes fanned;
The wandering Arab flies that fatal ground,
And tells of bones that whiten on the sand
Of them that came from some far Western land;
And many a tale of awe he loves to weave
When tents are pitched, and camels patient stand;
What time the caravan is hushed at eve,
And the last tints of day the western cloud-wreaths leave.

XLII.

Yea, and he speaks,* night closing darker in,
Of sounds, then heard when shepherds pen their fold,
Like tramp of horse, and battle's mingled din,
That haunt the fields where slaughter was of old;
And wails, that make the very heart's blood cold,
And shouts of victory and trumpets' bray;
And next of low sad voices he hath told,
That from the hill-side call, at close of day,
The traveller by his name, and lure him from his way.

XLIII.

Woe for him then, as over crag and sand
The Spirit of the Wilderness leads on;
Ne'er shall he see the watch-fires of his band;
Forward and forward, till all hope is gone,
Chasing the voice mysterious. And anon
Of Pihahiroth's waste the legends tell,
Hard by the sea where Israel's glory shone,
How aye, since there the red-cross warriors fell,
Rings forth, at matin-hour, a ghostly matin-bell.

* This belief of the Arabs is mentioned repeatedly by Lord Lindsay, Chateaubriand, and other travellers in the East.

XLIV.

Land of the drought, the famine, and the sword,
Land of unearthly terrors! if it be
That, when thy cup of vengeance is outpoured,
There lacks one drop of perfect misery
To fill the goblet,—not alone on thee
These woes descend, but, like the plague-spot, spread
O'er them that walk thy plains. O Traveller, flee;
They, and they only, have escaped that fled;
And they that will abide, their doom be on their head!

XLV.

Come forth in all thy beauty, Star of Night!
Look down upon those ruins! See, at last
For toilsome travel girt, and armed for fight,
The venturous traveller hath the desert past;
On broken frieze and capital are cast
Fitful and death-like shadows, by the gleam
Of Arab chieftain's watch-fire, waning fast;
That chief hath sworn the pilgrim Frank should dream
In Petra's walls, and drink of Wady Mousa's* stream.

* The Arab chief who conducted Captains Irby and Mangles swore by the true faith of a Mussulman, that the Franks should drink of Wady Mousa, in spite of the opposition of the Sheikh of that place.

XLVI.

Yes, he has gained his end!—has laughed to scorn
The perils of the desert and the sword;
And those fair piles, of art majestic born,
His pencil's magic power hath safely stored;
For this to Heaven his earnest prayer was poured,
Prayer too successful, if he might but learn
The doom against the high adventure scored
Of them whose hearts for Petra's treasures yearn—
—Through Edom pass who may, he never shall return.

XLVII.

For ah! too late, upon the fevered bed,
Tended by stranger hands and stranger hearts,
When round his eyes flit shadowy forms of dread,
And pestilence through every artery darts
Mysterious poison, and the sick man starts
At the dim gulph that he must pass—too late
Shall he remember, ere all memory parts,
How he that enters Idumea's gate
Shall speak his mortal doom, and ratify his fate.*

* "Thus will I make Mount Seir most desolate, and cut off from it him that passeth out, and him that returneth." Ezek. xxxv. 7. Keith well observes, that of the four principal travellers who have visited Edom, Irby and Mangles did not pass through it, and they returned home; Seetzen and Burchhardt did pass through it, and they never returned.

XLVIII.

How long, O LORD, how long! And wilt Thou never
Look with Thy tender love on Esau's race?
And shall the whirlwind of destruction ever
Sweep in its wrath o'er Edom's dwelling-place?
Th' immeasurable riches of Thy grace,
Shall they not win their way?—The heavy sin*
Hath heavily been punished: shall not place
At last be found that mercy enter in,
And that long-promised line of golden years begin?

XLIX.

Yes! far as shore can stretch, or sail has reached,
Midst pagan wisdom and barbaric horde,
The everlasting Gospel must be preached,
And the One Faith acknowledge the One LORD:
Then, when as o'er the deep the waves are poured,
And earth is full of that All-glorious Name,
For Idumea mercy shall be stored,
And Seir's wild mount shall yet His praise proclaim,
And for her grief have joy, and double for her shame.

* Die schwere Schuld ist schwer gebüsst. SCHILLER.

L.

O let that day approach! when now at length
The kingdoms of the world shall own His sway,
The Everlasting! when in matchless strength
The Gospel-Heralds shall have won their way,
Changed hopelessness to hope, turned night to day,
Lightened the blind, taught praises to the dumb,
Yea, raised up life in death. And still we pray,
Our first desire and last, and wishes' sum,
Hasten that glorious time! O GOD, Thy kingdom come!

MAMMON.

1852.

MAMMON.

TWILIGHT is on the broad and glorious Rhine!
From dark ravine and dewy valley now
Each stream-voice echoes hoarser: pinegroves sing
Their everlasting strain more solemnly,
Faint in the distance; faint, and yet most sweet,
Like spirit-whisperings, that, when night grows old
And the sick taper glimmers faintlier, call
The righteous Homeward: brighter ev'n than that,
(Bright though that be) wherewith the moon to-night
Decks the *Seven Mountains.* Each, with base enwrapped
In solitude and mist and shade, exalts
His noble head to a serener world,
And wears a halo-diadem of light.

'Twere no unworthy lesson, gazing first
On that celestial splendour, where the star
That bids the shepherd fold, is riding high
'Twixt Lichtenstein and Sternberg, and the clouds
Bright as with bdellium and the onyx-stone
Attend the moon, and some few planets dare
Her fullest blaze of light, and deck the sky
With gems of gold, (that country's gold is good)*
Then to look down upon the waves that hide,
Dimpling and eddying in their seaward course,
That old mysterious treasure,† swept belike
Down to some river cavern, or concealed
In the fair treacherous arms of green Lurlei.‡
So heavenly things with earthly scenes contrast:
They—those celestial riches—breathe of peace,
And draw the spirit up, by some sweet charm,
Into the City, whose abiding streets
Are golden, as it were transparent glass,
Whose light has jasper radiance, and whose throngs

* Genesis ii. 12. "And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx-stone."

† The allusion is to the Legend of the Niebelungen, murdered by Hagen for their treasure, now concealed in the Rhine.

‡ The celebrated Rhine whirlpool, near Saint Goar.

Wear the blest diadem before their God,
And sing His endless praise. The earthly hoard,
That dim and yellow clay which men call gold,
O'er which the Rhine-waves chant, from age to age,
Their song of sadness, teaches other lore:
Tells of th' oppressor and th' oppressed; the shriek
Of mortal fear, the thick short sob of death,
The midnight burial, and the ceaseless worm
That gnaws the conscience; tells of fierce despair;
And cries, as with the avenger's voice, for blood.

O Mammon! thou hast won o'er this fair world
(Fair but for thee, and in thy spite yet fair)
A heritage of woe! On many a moor
From Ural steppes, that greet the dawning day,
To the green prairies of the further west,
Thou rear'st thy trophies. Where each autumn saw
The desert kindle with its blushing heath
In all its purple beauty, there, one morn,
There sank upon its breast a purpler stain.
Thence is the place accursed: thence at eve
The lated peasant shuns the spot, and tells

Of shrieks that, in the lull of autumn-gusts,
Mysterious rise, and footsteps not of earth;
And as the shuddering circle gather in
Around the winter hearth, the murderer's tale
One moral ends: This did the lust of gold.
Thine, Spirit of all evil, where the Alps
Look from their southern barriers, hoar with snow,
Down on Italian plains, and all the land
Is young with life and spring, a land of vines
And olives, love and beauty, bloom and hope,—
Thine, midst dark ilex or the lighter shade
Of cork or green acacia, is the Cross,*
That, grey with years and battered with the storm,
Tells yet, that GOD'S great vengeance never sleeps.

In the far west, where suns go down in gold,
And fancy loves to linger, building up
Her domelike palaces in gorgeous clouds,
Islands there are of everlasting spring,

* The crosses erected in Southern Europe on spots where a murder has been committed.

Where seas of deep calm blue smile* countlessly
'Twixt woods of emerald: where, in mimic war,
The green banana waves her giant flags,
Her silver trumpets the datura sounds,
And squadron'd forests, marshall'd as for fight,
March o'er the land: where birds of glorious wing,
Bright as some rainbow's fragments, kindle up
The twilight of the groves; and earth and sky,
Redundant with their life, would render back
Their flush of beauty, their excess of song,
In sacrifice to GOD, who gave them all,—
Thou too hast altars here, thy cursed shrines,†
O Mammon, dark with crime, and based on blood:
Thither they came, those wanderers of the wave,
Who owned no nation, who adored no GOD
Save thee, thou Prince of this world! in whose ears
The orphan's cries were song, whose flag was death,
In whose regard the widow's tears were joy,

* . . . . ποντίωντε κυμάτων
ἀνήριθμον γέλασμα. . . . .

† The following lines allude to the custom of the Buccaneers, in concealing a treasure, to bury the body of a slave close by, in order that his spirit might keep watch over the deposit.

And desolate hearths a triumph; in whose hands
The cup that, brimmed with wine, had dregs of blood:
Thither they brought, their decks heaped high with spoil,
Great ingots of rough gold, and priceless stones
That flashed a ruby-blaze, or softlier glowed
With emerald's sheen, or sapphire's, king of gems:
Goblets, embossed with rude barbaric pearl
That shone in Delhi's banquets, delicate shrines
Torn from the ancient church, where lilies hang
In silver droopingness, and oak-leaves wreathe
Their golden chaplets, and acanthus twines
Its cold moist tendrils in metallic life;
They brought the treasures of the tomb,—the ring
That in the festival of bridal troth
Pledged Loveliness to Faith; the ring that saw,
Through many an hour of hope and year of joy,
Bright eyes, and happy faces, and the light
Of tried affection, and the gathering group
Of rosebuds round the mother-rose; the ring
That when this life in better life was lost,
And earthly swallowed up of heavenly love,

Decked the cold finger still, to teach that Faith
O'erleaps the grave, and Hope can mock at Death.
....They furl the sails: the grating anchor drops:
The black flag quivers idly in the breeze:
They choose the spot: a long low tongue of sand,
Barren and bleaching in the tropic sun,
Or rank with twilight-venom, when the dew
From festering jungle, and unknown lagoon,
And foul morass, exhales the mortal plague.
One gazes on that scene, whose gaze no more
Shall earthly landscape fix: the murdered slave
Must in the treasure's sepulchre be laid,
By prayer unblest, by Christian men unknown,
That so his spirit, restless in the earth
Until its consummation, evermore
Might guard the lone deposit. So at eve
Should plunderers fly the spot, and tell of forms
Glimmering amidst the shade, and low sad wails,
Nor dare to tempt the treasure's spirit-watch.

Yet would that these lone places of the earth
Were all that owned thy lordship, O thou great

And tyrant monarch! Thou, in Christian lands,
Exalt'st thy throne above the Throne of God:
Thou on His servants weld'st thy heavy chains,
And lead'st them willing captives. No expanse
Of eastern waters is before us now,
No gallant vessel, laden with the spoils
Of nations: this is Mammon's truer shrine:
High noon on breezy fields and heathy hills,
The song of birds, the toying of the gale
With trees and flowers: but no sweet sounds of noon,
Or sight of summer gladness, which God made,
To cheer the heart, to smoothe the brow of him
Who sits and toils, a ready slave, for gold.
Duskness and dreariness around, and age
That brings decay, not reverence: all the air
Peopled with motes, that dance like restless thoughts
Of riches: tomes inscribed with mystic signs,
Huge chests of well-wrought iron, in whose jaws
Moulder the parchments, by extremest art
Contrived, and hours of patient toil, to give
Immortal heritage to mortal man
And make the future sure. So days go by

Heaping his treasure higher, where he sits
The lord of all, intent upon his world
Of growing schemes,—and what a world it is!
His is the bark that on the southern breeze
Spreads her white sails o'er Biscay's stormy gulf:
His are the camels that midst turban'd troops
Of Islam, and the loud muezzin's cry,
('Tis sunset there) are entering Bagdad's gate:
For him the Epirot peasant tills the vine
Aulona yields, and Parga's summery height:
For him, where cold antarctic suns go down,
Midst giant icebergs towering to the sky
In grim blue desolation, sturdy hands
Press the hard chase of ocean-shouldering whales!
For him, in southern groves, where lordly Rhone
Gives bridal troth to Arar, spins the worm
Her silken vest: for him, in eastern isles,
They tear the coral from the sea-nymph's halls,
And the pierced fish exudes transparent pearl.
He the meanwhile, force, heart, and soul of all,
Spans deserts in his schemes, and bridges deeps:
Knits east and west in one: nor severed tongues

Nor robber-hordes, nor pathless wastes, impede.
Yet, lord of others, bowing at his will
Nature's hard powers, and man's yet harder heart,
Enjoining sea and flame to make a league
And do his bidding, borrowing, for the wings
To speed his thoughts, the lightning's viewless might;
Whom courtly heads are bowed to, whom great kings
Delight to honour,—he is Mammon's slave:
He to the god of this world offers all,
All he has here, and all he hopes beyond:
The widow's eye is dim with nightly woe,
—He never wipes her tears: the prisoner's heart
Is sick with hope,—he never breaks his chains:
Therefore no treasures is he laying up
Where moth may not corrupt, nor thief destroy:
He hath his portion here, for this world's gems
Bartering the one true Pearl: for earthly gold
Surrendering up the golden streets of Heav'n,
And thus, with all his hoards, not rich toward GOD.

And bloodier sacrifice in days of old
Men never gave to Chemosh, or the thirst

Of sateless Moloch, when in Ammon's groves
The shrieks of children filled his dread abode:
Albeit no image Mammon's temple decks,
Yet stand the victims in his house, and all
The instruments of offering: 'tis a feast
Not as of old, where once to taste of death
Was all the agony his rites enjoined,
And though the earthly frame were crushed, the soul
Might part unconquered: this, long day by day,
And year by year, works death in very life,
Dims the bright eye, drives colour from the cheek,
Looses the silver cord, dries up the play
Of life's sweet fount, and breaks the golden bowl.
And as such sacrifice were all too mean,
The very soul, GOD'S likeness upon earth,
They rack and wear and grind, until it lies
Wreck of His work and ruin of itself.
Hence childhood is no childhood: hence the Spring
Hath no dear innocent pleasures, dewy strolls,
And fields with cowslips bright and wreaths of May:
Summer no glorious woods, what time the sun
Deluges heav'n with his excess of light,

But leaves them twilight: Autumn kindles not
His burning tints, nor yields his wildwood spoil:
And Winter, surly monarch, brings no charms
To soothe his frosts and wile his long drear nights,
No Christmas fire, nor tale of goblin lore.
Nor lacks fit temple for such rites: the huge
Misshapen shrine of wealth that, smeared and gaunt,
Stretches its many-windowed hideousness
Athwart the murky street, and belches forth
Its everlasting clouds of smoke and flame:
Nor lacks fit music: the incessant clang
That jars and thrills and quivers through the dome
In fevered hurry, making it instinct
As with a ghastly life that is not life,
Itself meet anthem for the god of gold.
But better spirits now invade thy shrine,
Strong though thou art, O Mammon!—stronger far
Is Love, that never tires in seeking out
The lost and helpless; Hope, that points across
Life's stormy deep to Death's serener shore;
Faith, kindling at His Word who cannot lie,
Her heavenly torch; and Justice, chief of all,

That checks the oppressor in his height of pride,
Lifts the oppressed from earth, and marks the bounds,—
'Thus far, but no step further!' These, howe'er
Ill spirits or ill men oppose awhile,—
Living and conquering on for evermore,
Shall flinch not from the strife, until they set
The prisoner free, and speak goodwill to men.

But fresher lures are thine, and subtler charms
To spread thy worship. . . . . Lo! thou wavest thy wand
Over a parched and barren land, a land
In earth's far limits, desolate and drear,
Whereto no traveller ventures, on whose plains
No taper breaks the horror of the night,
Nor busy hum of men awakes the morn:
But all the summer withers in the fire
Intenser suns shoot forth,—with poisonous fogs
The dim Pacific blights the closing year,—
And night and day its melancholy surge
Makes mournful music. At the enchanter's touch
The rivers roll down gold: gold streaks the sands:

Gold fills the mountain's crystal veins: the rock
Is crushed to gold. And straight as if for life,
Yea rather, struggling as for Eden's Gate,
Men pant and agonise to enter in;
Leave all dear home-joys, children's sports at eve,
And eyes that tell, and lips that breathe, of love,
For dark companionship of them whose heart
Hard as the nether millstone, foul with guile,
Respects no law, regards nor GOD nor man,
Throws pity to the wind: whose hand is red
With stains, that not unnumbered hoards of gold
Can turn to whiteness. There, when burning suns
Parch life and vigour up, and autumn moons
Look down in deadly radiance, toiling on,
Heart, hand, and eye intent, they bear all woe,
They brave all danger; girding up their loins
For battle with the rock and with the storm,
The pestilence and savage beast. For them
No holy bell awakes the Day of Prayer:
For them, when Nature sinks beneath her load,
No gentle hands compose the couch, no voice
Breathes hope of this world, or the world to come

Into the failing ear: the branch-roofed hut
That moans beneath the gale, or scantly shades
The intolerable glare of noon, is theirs;
The rude unhallowed visitings of them
Who with foul jest or tale of new-found spoil
Would smoothe the dying pillow: last of all,
The soul that parts without a hope or prayer;
The untended corpse, and hurried unblest grave.

Oh! if they knew what half the earthly toil,
What half the anguish of their yielding up
Children, or bride, or home, or friends, might gain
Of heavenly guerdon! There are those that tempt
The selfsame peril, bear the selfsame toil,
Yea, die, in man's dim sight, the selfsame death.
These do it to obtain a mortal prize;
Those an immortal. These to gather in
A perishable harvest of the dross
That fades with very using; those to gain
An endless meed of labour: souls redeemed
By no vile price of things corruptible,
But with the Blood of that Eternal Lamb,

Who wills that where He is, they too should be.
Servants of God, press onward! In His sight
Your perils and your toils are laying up
Your great reward: His are ye: Him ye serve;
And suffering with Him, with Him too shall reign.

It were a glorious scene, if, rolling back
The thick dim mist of ages, we might bid
Those princely merchant cities live and glow
In second life! Thee, Tyre, the mart of earth!
Whose white sails glittered from the prophet-heights
Of Carmel, to the portals of the west,
The twin Atlantic pillars; yea, that dared,
With unknown oceans battling, to upraise
Their Asian flag on Europe's western shores.
Thee, Carthage, that in equal contest long
Strov'st for the world's huge empire: thee not least,
Bride of the Adriatic, building up
On the blue waves thy snowy palaces,
A very dream of beauty, where all day
Dome, spire, and lordly arch, and hallowed shrine
Mirror themselves in that unruffled main,

And all night long the moon, from that deep sky,
Weaves fairy network out of light and shade
Athwart the river streets. By thee they rose,
O Mammon, Prince of this world! They by thee
Attained their height of fame: by deeds of blood
And merciless rapine adding realm to realm,
And heaping hoard on hoard, till like the fire
Kindled from exhalation of some marsh
That shoots across the autumn night, they sank
And left a dark and sudden void behind.

Not such as these, my country! though on thee,
Spite of thy boast, hang Mammon's heavy chains,
Yet not as these thou drew'st thy battle sword
When banded Europe, resolute to bow
Thy forehead to the dust, stood girt for war:
Thou, not as they for lucre's cursed sake,
Pour'd'st forth thy chosen warriors at his call,
Who, when the oppressor's rod was snapped in twain,
Lured by no fancied glory, turned aside
By no ambition, sheathed his victor sword,
Spake the glad tidings, and bade earth have peace.

Therefore his name thro' England's thousand homes
Was as a household word: and now his deeds
Are with past ages, England weeps at once
The hero o'er his foes and o'er himself
With tears unknown before: and other years
Shall wreathe a deathless chaplet round the name
Of him whom righteous cause and mighty toils
And victor-end made glorious—WELLINGTON!

Honour to them, and blessing be to Him
Who made them what they are, that dare to laugh
At Mammon's witcheries, building up on high
Their surer treasures! Following in His steps
Who, seeing "all the kingdoms of the world
"And all the glory of them," stood unmoved,
They turn away from perishable things
And seek their meed in heav'n. They speak the word:
The tall spire glimmers o'er the swelling copse
Of oak or chestnut, hallowing all the scene,
And calls to prayer the hearts that never prayed,
And turns the scoffer's blasphemy to praise.

They in the fœtid caverns of the mine
Shed holiest light: they from the mouths of babes
And sucklings perfect praise: they speed the sail
That flakes the great Atlantic, or that glows
In summer creeks betwixt palmetto groves,
Or hails the midnight sun, where icebergs grind
Against the eternal barriers of the Pole.
The wilderness and solitary place
Pour blessings on them: smile the desert wastes,
And blossom as the rose: they gather in
The harvest of the earth, against the day
When the round world shall be the LORD'S again,
And all the fulness of it. Then at last
The kingdom and the riches shall be His,
And He shall reign for ever. Wanes the night,
And day is dawning fast: our part shall be
To hail each brightening streak that heralds now
Its near approach; and till it breaks, to watch!

JUDITH.

1856.

JUDITH.

I.

THE gloom and gathering of a night
That heralds in the storm!
On ancient gate, and terraced height,
And bulwarks towering in their might,
And, in the eve's last radiance bright,
Each massy idol form,
To whom, in days of old, as now,
Chaldæa's children love to bow;—
To whom, in hymns of praise, ascribe
Their victories o'er each warrior-tribe,
O'er Sepharvaim's* distant shore,
Henah and Ivah, names of yore:

* Isaiah xxxvii. 13.

And all the city's toil and strife
Is blending into rest:
As droops Day's brightness and its life
Amid the dark'ning West.

II.

More lone and dark, more grey and grim,
Each temple sinks in silence dim:
The shades a deeper awe diffuse
Amidst those awful avenues,
Where wingëd forms of giant height
Stretch out to distance infinite:
And where, while evening's softer balm
Descends 'midst intervening palm,
And bids its feathery branches wave
O'er frieze and vault and architrave,—
Each monster mass of storied stone
Seems more unearthly and more lone:
Each idol-vista, South and North,
Glooms more interminably forth,
And points, in ever-narrowing Aisle,
Towards the Temple's central pile.

Yes:—even in very ruin, vast,
Such relics of the Assyrian past,
Midst desolation, drought, and sand,
Startle and awe the pilgrim band.
The pomp and revelry of yore,
The music and the mirth are o'er:
The halls that flashed with gems and gold
  In one decay are blent;
No shepherd there will pen his fold,
  Nor Arab pitch his tent:
No sight to bid the heart rejoice,
  No scene of pomp and pride:
Hushed is the feast, and stilled the voice
  Of bridegroom and of bride:
Those memories of a victor-race
  Are all arrayed in gloom:
There finds the owl her dwelling-place,
  There bitterns build and boom:
Such was the lot denounced of yore
By masters of prophetic lore,
  And such Assyria's doom.

III.

But now, as daylight dies away,
And eve turns purple into grey,
Tier over tier, in dizzy height,
The palace flashes into light;
The halls glow out more fiercely bright,
The courts more wildly blaze:
And deeper yet, and deader shades
O'erwhelm the silent colonnades,
Amidst whose dim and vast arcades
No venturous footstep strays.
The mansion of imperial state,
With light and shade reticulate,
Lifts up her blazing head on high,
And glares against the midnight sky:
The trumpet bids her brazen throat
Above the feast resound,
And dulcimers with gentler note,
And flutes make airier music float
The vaulted roof around.

IV.

Then went the royal edict forth,
(That lordly gathering's end,)
—"Thus saith the Lord of all the earth,—
Let all the earth attend:
Each race and tribe that owns our sway
From the great Sea to far Cathay,
From where the twilight dies away,
To where the morn dawns, freshly grey,—
Our will receive,—our law obey;—
And this shall be the sign:
Our chiefs and squadrons, issuing out
With pomp of war and battle shout,
To every land and realm shall go,—
—Or parched by summer's fiercest glow,
Or girt with everlasting snow,
Or decked with oil and wine:
From each receiving, at their feet,
Water and earth, the tribute meet
That marks us this world's monarch throned,
The LORD, by all his vassals owned;
In token of our royal right
And Nabuchodonosor's might."

V.

As once on Egypt's evil day
The locust-swarm arose;
So, in its terrible array,
O'er lands that tremble and obey,
The endless torrent flows.
All have one courage, all one vow:
In meet array they muster now,
Marshalled for war, and charged with death,
On the green plain of Bectileth:
For every realm hath armed her best,
And sent them to the fight:
And North and South, and East and West,
Their varying sons unite:
They leave the jungles, wild and far,
That choke the vales of Malabar:
They leave the shores where pearlfish lie
Midst seas that seem another sky:
From Tartary's steppes they pour amain;
And Beloochistan's arid plain:
They leave the mango-woods that rise
Beneath the glare of Indian skies,

And the sweet palm-groves and the rest
Whence Araby hath name, the Blest:
Yea, where he mats, with sand and weed,
His hut, the starveling Samoyede,
They gather, in unwarlike shew,
With the rude pike and ruder bow:
They come, convened by spell and ban,
The nomad tribes of Turkistan:
And Lydia's women-hearts are there,
And Phrygia's sons their falchions bare.
For Nabuchodonosor's yoke
The whole wide world must sway:
The LORD of all the earth hath spoke,—
Let all the earth obey!

VI.

Where is the GOD of Israel now?
And where is Israel's Trust?
And shall His ransomed yield to bow
Before an arm of dust?
Westward and westward rolls the storm;
Beyond Palmyra's walls they swarm:

Damascus' harvest-fields were white
When morning kindled into light;
Damascus' harvest-fields, at night,
Were bare, and black and seer:*
No more the merchant-craft shall ply
Among the cities, walled and high,
That, in the crystal Arbonai,†
Are mirrored fair and clear:
And Midian's sheepcotes, wrapped in flame,
Shall speak of Midian's woe and shame,
To many a coming year.
As Eden smiles the land before;
Their sheaves the peasants bind;
And, like Gehenna's very door,
The wreck that glares behind.
Ho, all! your closest squadrons form!
Westward and westward rolls the storm.

VII.

O gods of many an ancient fane,
Gods of the mountain and the plain!

* Judith li. 27. † Ibid. ii. 24.

Are hecatombs of victims slain,
Are magic spells and rites in vain
One little hour of peace to gain,
One little hour of right retain,
  Before the invader's host?
O shrines, with human blood-drops dyed,
Proved then most false, when sorest tried!
Have all your thousand prophets lied,—
  Was falsehood all their boast?
What! in this great and fearful hour,
Hath Baalzebub's arm no power?
  Hath Dagon ceased to save?
Must suppliant hands in vain embrace
Their Nisroch of the eagle-face?
Finds Tyre from Tyre's own god no grace,
  That lady of the wave?
Yes! perish all the impostors' swarm!—
Westward and westward rolls the storm.

VIII.

O Israel, once the LORD'S elect!
Can Israel's GOD no more protect?

O Thou, their glory and their song,
Why standest Thou far off so long?
Where are the mercies shed of old
Upon the sheep of Thine own fold?
Look, how Thy ransomed people bow
In sackcloth and in ashes now
  Around Thy holy shrine;
And still Thou answerest not their vow,
  And still Thou giv'st no sign.
Not one is there, from shore to shore,
That understandeth any more;
Not one that, skilled in prophet-lore,
  May speak to Abraham's line.
Awake, and manifest Thy praise
  To those assembled nations;
Awake, as in the ancient days
  Of former generations!
Yea, for Thy loving-mercy's sake,
Arm of the LORD, awake! awake!

IX.

Keep the hill-passages up from the plain;
Westward and westward they hurry amain:

Strengthen the battlement! burnish the brass!
Stop ye the fountain, and scarp ye the pass!
Men of Bethulia, mark from afar
All the long line of the oncoming war:
See, how the horizon is heaving in life!
Multitudes, multitudes rush to the strife!
Squadron on squadron are battleward rolled:
Elephants stalk in their trappings of gold:
Steeds, in their madness of joy to engage,
Swallow the ground in their fierceness and rage:
Battle-axe, battle-bow, scymetar, lance,
Flash out around them the armies advance:
Water and earth ye have sworn to refuse,—
Vengeance they vow on the land of the Jews:
None shall escape me, the great or the small,
Saith Holofernes, the Lord of them all.
Men of Bethulia! gallant and true!
Judah and Benjamin lean upon you.

X.

Of all most fearful woes to try,
Of all most dreadful deaths to die,

In the dark crew of suffering first,
Now is thy time to rule, O Thirst!
No water from the living well;
  No water from the pool;
No drop, from Heaven's own blessed cell,
  To comfort and to cool!
Once happy childhood, day by day,
Now moans its tiny life away;
The little tongue no more can speak;
Death's greyness shades the little cheek;
The frame is stretched on misery's rack;
The eyes grow glazed, the tongue grows black:
The big unconscious tear-drops fall
Whose end shall be that Heavenly Hall
  Where tears are wiped away:
And the strong man is brooding nigh
In voiceless, matchless agony,
To watch, with dim and fever'd eye,
  His darling's slow decay.
With death, and such a death, in view,
A single heart is good and true,
And from the city one great wail

Goes up to GOD above;
And man's resolve and courage fail,
But never woman's love.
Then wakes the murmur fierce and strong,
But hushed at first, and low;
"How long, O LORD of Hosts, how long
Must we resist the foe?
What thought of hope? what use to wait?
Give up the keys and ope the gate!"
—And gathering tone, and winning strength,
It swells amidst the crowd at length:
"Assyria's Chiefs have scaled the pass,
Assyria's hosts environ;
The Heaven above our heads is brass,
The Earth beneath is iron:
Better, where every choice seems worst,
To die by sword, than die by thirst.
Yield then the city, ere too late:
Give up the keys, and ope the gate!"

XI.

"Have courage, brethren! five days still
For patience and for prayer;

Those past and over, have your will,
If then no succour in our ill
  Proclaim Jehovah's care."
—Resolved against the Assyrian yoke
Ozias thus, and Charmis spoke.
"Meanwhile, send up one earnest cry
To Abraham's GOD, Who dwells on high,
To hear us from His Sanctuary,
  And work deliverance there."

XII.

Hast thou not seen the evening star,
When, victor o'er the midnight war
  Of thunder-clouds on high,
It glitters from their darksome breast,
Impressing on their fierce unrest
  Its own serenity?
Thus, as debate grew high and loud,
And wild division rent the crowd,
Forth, as they spake such words of shame,
In all her beauty, Judith came.
Heav'n gave the far-off star its beam:

Earth's vapours feel and own its gleam:
Heav'n sent amidst the angry press
A vision of such loveliness,
With skill to guide, with hope to bless,
To be their comfort in distress,
And bring them to the port.
And thus she stood amidst the strife,
As one that came with words of life
From GOD'S celestial court.

XIII.

"And is it thus ye bind," she cried,
"His strength, Who dwells on high?
Thus mete His power to guard and guide,
Who made the earth and sky?
Wherefore should He accept the term
Of this world's child, the dust and worm,
And save you when ye will?
Is it not His, to-day, to-morrow,
To fix the period of your sorrow,
And turn to bliss your ill?

O slow of heart! O dull of hope!
Five little days your utmost scope?
Five days His sovereign power to tie,
Whose own is all eternity?
Hear me: by me shall come the blow
That lays the Assyrian tyrant low
  In all his fierce array:
Hear me: GOD's strength shall be my lamp,
  His Wisdom be my stay;
And thus amidst the alien camp
  His light shall guide my way.
In Him confiding, let me go,
And ye shall find, and Israel know,
One woman's arm can quell the foe,
One woman's hand can deal the blow
  That sets Bethulia free.—
And wilt Thou not, O LORD, be just
To crush the mighty in the dust,
And to lift up the hearts that trust
  And make their boast in Thee?"

XIV.

Now are her widow's robes laid by,
Her joyous garb put on;
And thus, apart, with tearful eye,
She makes her orison:
"Thou Who—and Thou art still the same—
Did'st arm with righteous brand,
Avenger of a deed of shame,
My father Simeon's hand;
Such courage now on me confer,
Thine own avenging minister:
And nerve my arm and steel my heart,
That, though I win by woman's art,
My hand may play no woman's part
In retribution's hour.
So Assur's chiefs and serfs shall own
That Thou art LORD, and Thou alone;
And all their gods of wood and stone
Shall tremble at Thy power."

XV.

Now, in the camp, the watch-fires' light
Was smouldering to decay,

As, through the stillness of the night,
To where the tents gleamed ghostly white,
  Two women bent their way.
The mirth was high, and loud the song
In Holofernes and his throng:
The silver lamps soft radiance poured;
With gold and jewels flashed the board:
And silken hangings waved on high
That blazed in Sidon's deepest dye,
Where, 'neath that priceless canopy,
  Assyria's chieftain lay.
In vaunting high, in frenzied hope,
With Israel's GOD he dares to cope,
  And laugh at Israel's stay.
She came, Bethulia's fairest form,
As dawns the rainbow on the storm:
She came the chieftain's eyes to bless
And conquer with the loveliness
That, in his hour of joy and mirth,
Promised a Paradise on earth.
With words to comfort and secure,
The tale she wove, she framed the lure;

How Israel's God would soon forsake
The people of His rest,
Because His holy tithes they take,
By famine sore distrest.
"That done, Bethulia's towers shall be,
Lord Holofernes, given to thee:
And thou and I shall work a deed
Whereof the years to come shall read:
Shall raise the power, and swell the fame
Of Nabuchodonosor's name.
Such is the task that He ordains,
The God Who over Israel reigns;
I am His servant, as ye see:
He hath a work to do by me."

XVI.

Five days of fear, five days of woe,
Five days of triumph to the foe,
And still no help is here;
The shadows lengthen out upon
The giant plain of Esdrelon,
Another eve is near.

Then had ye seen, if mortal eye
  Might pierce the shades that hide
Those portals of eternity
  Where future things abide—
Then had ye seen, midst evening's ray,
Death's Angel speed his bidden way:
To no mean man his course is bent;
  He comes not for the old;
He hath an errand to a tent
  That flames with gems and gold:
He hath an errand to the strong,
  The high of heart and pride:
For vengeance, though it tarry long,
  Shall not be turned aside.
Vain, Holofernes, now to flee;
He hath a message unto thee!

XVII.

Night hath come down in its gloom and its state:
Hark! in the stillness a voice at the gate:
"Open the portal, assemble the crowd,
God the Avenger hath smitten the proud;

Tell ye the tidings to far and to near;
Conquering Judah, away with your fear!
Spite of his rage, and his threats, and his lust,
Great Holofernes is stretched in the dust;
He at a woman's feet bowed him and fell;
Him his own falchion hath hurried to hell:
He that o'er kindreds and nations had sway,
He, whom the wide world had learned to obey,
Found in the beauty of woman his lure,—
Found it and perished,—and yet she is pure.
Nineveh now shall have wailing for mirth,
Now shall her idols be bowed to the earth:
Send ye the tidings to Salem with speed;
Incense shall glimmer and victims shall bleed.
Own Him, Who trust in His goodness rewards,
KING of all kings, own Him LORD of all lords!

XVIII.

Those scenes are past—but past is not
  The faith and hope they tell;
That raised a Judith's victor lot,
That consecrates the mountain spot
  Where Holofernes fell.

The deed is o'er, the faith remains:
The faith that through all toils and pains
  Shall win her conquering way;
That scorns her light affliction here,
And sees in vision bright and clear
  The things that last for aye:
The faith that rather chooses now
  The mockery of her foes,
And to her GOD persists to bow
  Though all the world oppose:
The faith that for her Captain's sake
Hath braved the scaffold and the stake;
The faith that, spite of care and fear,
GOD guard and strengthen in us here,
Although its vision must be dim,
Until He take us Home to Him!

SINAI.

1857.

SINAI.

ETERNAL Spirit, Who in ancient days
To Thine elected servants,—thenceforth filled
With wisdom to discern things else seal'd up
From human eye, and courage to proclaim
The truth amidst a world that hates the truth,
And lore prophetic, and the artist-skill
That shapes to heavenly beauty earthly forms,—
In divers times and sundry manners spak'st;
Sometimes amidst the visions of the night,
When deep sleep falleth on the sons of men,
Anon by parable, or type, or sign,
In varying nature; Thou Whose lore was heard
On desolate mountains or on city roofs,
In sevenfold thunders, or the still small voice;—

If Thou, from GOD proceeding, GOD Thyself,
Dost on the sightless pour Thy Day, dost wake
To heavenly harmonies the sleeping ear,
Dost teach the dumb to speak Thy praise, the dull
Of heart to know Thy knowledge,—hear me now:
And since of Thee, though not as yet Thyself,
But in Thy works, made manifest, my theme,—
So guide me doubtful, so uphold me weak,
That I, with awe and reverence, knowing well
The place whereon I stand is holy ground,
May yet draw nigh to that great sight,—yet hear
The Angel-trumpet wax exceeding loud,
And tell, nor rashly nor unmeetly, how
'GOD came from Teman, and the Holy One
From Paran,* at the Giving of the Law,
And bade the whole wide world hear Sinai's voice.

Oh! for one glance at that tremendous night,
That night to be remembered, when the host
Encamped by Pi-hahiroth, at the word
—"Command that they go forward!"—dared the sea:

* Exodus xiii. 18; and margin.

A brazen wall on this side and on that,
Fathoms on fathoms overhead, its waves
Curled and leapt up and bounded in their joy,
Beneath that mighty strong east wind, while yet
It girded in that horrid vale, a wall
As solid as the eternal adamant:
And still, as morning kindled to high noon,
And still, as high noon melted into eve,
The pillary cloud went on, half cloud, half tower,
Before the ransomed people, till at last
Old Afric's dim mysterious range began
To burn in living purple, purple first,
Then furnace-like, beneath the sun's red ball:
And ever, in their five-fold* ranks, moved on
The people of the LORD,—and evermore
Chariot and horse,—innumerable host!—
The flower of Zoan, followed hard behind:
Until the westering orb's last rays were shot
Athwart the glassy sea-walls, kindling up
A thousand magic colours, such as ne'er
Sparkled in sea-nymph's cave or Indian gem:

* Exodus viii. 18; and margin.

Next came the great grey calm of that day's death:
Then mailed Orion eyed the two-fold hosts.
But when the fourth watch of the night had changed
Israel's angelic guards,—for such were there
Then,—'and they had but newly set the watch,'*—
The pillar-cloud removed behind, and flashed
Unutterable brightness o'er the rear
Of that retreating victor-host, and poured
Intolerable gloom on Egypt's rout,—
Nor saw the one the other all that night.
Who can assault, when GOD Himself defends?
If GOD be for us, who can be against?
The morning dawns,—the rod is stretch'd,—the flood
Returns in all his strength,—and Israel sees
The Egyptians dead that day on that sea-shore.
—And thus, O Captain of Thy faithful band,
True Leader of Thy people! even thus
Thou, by Thy mighty hand and outstretch'd arm,
—Stretch'd out upon the Cross,—hast set them free
From worse than Egypt's iron chain, led home
Thy banished ones from exile, crowned Thy Saints
With light and life and everlasting love!

* Judges vii. 19

O change of changes! from the Land of On
Into the broad free desert! No more now
Those requiem-chambers of the old dead world,
Those mountain pyramids of Kings, where each
Reposes in his glory,—by the craft
Of painter imaged on the narrowing walls
Of corridors and passages and vaults;
Of corridors more labyrinthine still,
More intricately serpentining, led
In everlasting funeral array
Of one long, long procession,—on, on, on,
Midst monster-headed genii, and the forms
Of gods and demigods, and her that holds
The ostrich feather, Justice; and the Sun
Hawk-headed, and Osiris: while above
On every cornice painted thousand-fold
Spreads its blue wings the all-embracing sky:
Till in the central vault of all the dome,
The central vault, whereto the endless lines
Intwisted and enlinked, corradiate still,
Received among the gods, a god himself,
In the black marble of his last long home
The lonely lord of all the fabric lies.

No more of death! The desert teems with life,
The broad majestic desert! From this peak
I see all Israel marshalled in his tents
According to his tribes! And vanward there
Ramps Judah's royal Lion, from whose might
The kingly sceptre never more shall pass
Till, Priest and Monarch, Shiloh's self be come:
And he that trusts in guile, and not in strength,
The adder by the horse-path; and the race
Whom in unequal war a troop must first
Conquer, but 'he shall overcome at last':
And he, the wolf-whelp, that at morning-tide
Shall ravin, but at eve divide the spoil:
And he, whose blessings have prevailed beyond
The blessings of his ancestors, and filled
The utmost bound of those eternal hills:
I see them all—accursed he that bans,
Blessed be he that blesses them!—arrayed
With their Almighty's own Almightiness,—
All fed with bread celestial, all baptised
So lately, 'in the cloud and in the sea.'*

* 1 Cor. x. 2.

What do they here? where straitening in, the plain
Sees on each flank his mountain-walls arise
In ever-narrowing defile scarr'd and seam'd;
Here purple, as the mid-Atlantic; there
Crimson as grape-leaves turn at autumn's touch:
As if each multitudinous mass had boiled
With foaming fiery lava, and at once
Heard some magician's voice, and turn'd to stone.
What do they here?—Nay, this is not the place:
This is the vestibule, and not the shrine;
Though here, too, morn by morn, how wildly grand
To hear the myriad-voiced unearthly hymn
Reverberated back from rock and peak,
And 'toss'd and troll'd' from cliff to cliff,—'Arise,
'Arise, O LORD! and scatter Thou Thy foes!
'Let them that hate Thee flee before Thy face!'*
But onward eye and heart and soul! while still,
As prescient of some dreader mystery,
Rocks, giant rocks, grow more gigantic,—peaks
Tower heavenward more sublimely; all wild forms
Mix in a wilder chaos, all deep hues

* Numbers x. 35.

Assume a tint yet deeper; girding in
The very Altar of that mountain shrine,
That naked platform-cliff that towers on high,
Goal of the course and temple of the hills.
That is the spot of spots to mortal man:
That is the place whence GOD shall teach the world.

O wondrous Pentecost!—when wan and dim
Over the mountains of the unknown east
In all her timid beauty woke the morn:
A summer morn:—but not like summer breeze
The rushing mighty wind that swept adown
Each moaning cleft, nor yet like summer clouds
The flashing glory of the Sacred Mount:
They gather, tent by tent and line by line,
The thousands and ten thousands,—every eye
Upturn'd in mute expectancy of awe:
And a great dreadful hush is on the camp.
They gather,—sinful man to meet his Judge,
The creature his Creator: face to face
Shall mortal eyes see Him That made not death.
They gather,—and at once the mountain-side

Is clad with darkness, darkness to be felt,
Horrible, outer darkness: waxes straight
The trumpet's voice exceeding long and loud:
And thus, midst thunder-peal and lightning-flash,
Midst sights and sounds of terror, and the gaze
Of trembling multitudes,—GOD spake the Law.

Oh high eternal Law! so pure amidst
The vast defilements of an evil world,
So resolute to keep thine onward path
Though human subterfuge and earthly guile,
Though force and fraud and profit block thy way:
Yea, though in all her hideous forms, gaunt Pain
Start up to match Thee, and though Death itself
—And who but thou canst conquer death?—oppose!
Thou, like the sun-ray, that will enter in
The lordly palace, kindling up its state,
And adding glory to its gems and gold,
And lustre to its riches, yet not less
Will kiss the cradle of the peasant's babe,—
Thou stand'st midst nations on the battle-field
Supremest arbiter, and though awhile

Hush'd midst the din of arms,—yet still thou call'st
The GOD of Battles to thy constant aid
To crush the oppressor, and to raise the oppressed:
And not the less, midst sights and sounds of peace,
Thou gently lead'st the gentle: not the less
Presid'st o'er children, like a child thyself;
Art with them from the cradle, goest forth
As forth they go to battle with the world;
And guarded by them, guard'st them to the end.
For thee the Martyrs dared to win their Crowns,
And drink the bitter cup of this world's woe,
Strong in thy strength, if so they might attain
The river of GOD'S bliss for evermore.
And still a living, still a reigning power
Thou conquerest and shalt conquer till that day,
That blissful day, when justice shall exult,
Triumphant, in its own euthanasy,
And there be no law but the law of Love.
But hark! Amidst the thunder and the din
Of tempest and of trumpet, that low voice
That whispers,—'Speak *thou* with us, we obey;
But let not GOD speak with us lest we die.'

And thus he goes, alone of mortal men,
Into the thick black darkness: thus the Chief,
The daysman* 'twixt the people and their GOD,
In that mysterious forty days, heard sounds
Ineffable by human voice, saw sights
Intelligible to no earthly eye.
There saw he all the glory of the LORD,
There saw he all His goodness: not as that
Which makes the heavenliness of heaven itself,
The Beatific Vision: *that* to gain
Needs must we lay aside this earthly vest
And put on the celestial: not so he
Who then saw GOD, and seeing GOD, yet lived.
Yet oh! for that brief hour wherein he heard
The wondrous proclamation, written yet
Deep in the inmost heart, as oft as now
Some wandering sinner turns again to GOD!
It came not in the terror and the storm,
It was not echoed in the thunder-peal,
It flashed not in the lightning: soft its voice
As breath of summer gale o'er beds of flowers,

* Job ix. 33.

Soft as the gentlest, tenderest fleece of cloud
That flecks some mountain-peak at eve: 'The LORD
The merciful and gracious: pardoning sin,
Forgiving all transgression: keeping truth
And covenant and mercy with His own
To thousand generations.'—Thou hadst need
Thus pardon, LORD, if man will thus rebel!
Scarce was the wondrous vision closed, and scarce
The summer sun was shining as he wont
On the grey sides of Horeb, weaving there
That everlasting vest of light and shade
On immemorial crevices and peaks,
Than, false and faithless to their plighted word,
"All that the LORD commands us, we will do,"
—Forgetful of His Hand, Who made the sea
A way for His redeem'd, they crave new gods
To lead them onward,—they proclaim a feast,—
The desert has its Martyr,* and the crowd
Bow down before 'a calf that eateth hay.'

* Reference is made to the Jewish tradition that Hur, for opposing the idolatry of the people, was put to death; which gives an emphasis to the question addressed by Moses to Aaron, "What did this people unto *thee?*"

O Faith, whose trophies deck this lower world,
Albeit thy guerdon is laid up on high!—
Who nerv'st the feeble arm to dare great deeds
For Him thou lovest, steel'st the woman's breast
To conquer death, and tortures worse than death,
And shame beyond all tortures,—who hast stood,
When earthly hopes and earthly helps drop off
Like autumn leaflets from a mountain ash,
Firm as the mountain where that ash hath root,—
And calmly point'st from earthly agony
Which is but for a moment, to the prize
Of more exceeding and eternal weight;—
Where wert thou then? Thenceforth the heavy wrath
Fell upon Israel: plague on plague thenceforth,
Affliction on affliction: till, save two,
None entered on the blessed vales and hills
That flowed with milk and honey: none had part
In the long-promised and the final rest.

Five centuries pass. O space of this brief world
Writ in what characters of woe and blood!
What empires have departed! What great wars

Have thundered and have passed, like summer storms!
What conquering realms have owned the victor's yoke,
What victors been forgotten! yet those peaks,
Horeb and Sinai, and the lesser heights
That gird the sacred valley, still shine out
In all their summer majesty, though none,
Save wandering Arab, now may lift his eye
Up to the hills whence Israel's help once came:
Whence Israel's help still comes. For faint and lone,
A solitary exile ventures nigh
Where once the tramp of thousands echoed—where
Once the twelve tribes fell down and owned the Law.
Can he the lonely, he the exile, he
The fugitive and alien, can he come
In the same strength wherein these thousands marched,
Strength not their own, but drawn from Him, the same
To-day and yesterday and evermore?
Yes: great the tribulation whence he flies;
But great his victory also: he of late
Stood single midst the host of idol-Priests,
Alone confronting Israel's gathered tribes.
"Choose ye this day the GOD whom ye will serve:

The LORD of Hosts or Baal: and the power
That answereth by fire, let Him be god!"
Then all day long rose wail and moan and prayer
Up to the molten image—Israel's King
And Priests and people, call upon their god,
—No voice, no sound,—not any that regards.
And now the Western sea is bridged with gold
Where the great sun is sinking: like a path
For happy spirits, freed from earthly toil,
To enter on their land of golden rest.
Faint as a summer-cloud, the rosy peaks
Of Cyprus crest the horizon:—that besides
All is blue sea—blue, calm, unruffled deep:
The winds have died away, one lazy cloud
Hangs o'er the scene:—the palm-trees have forgot
To whisper, and the parch'd and thirsty ground
Sees yet another twilight gather in
Upon a heaven of brass and fields of iron.
But when in Salem's Temple far away
The evening sacrifice was offered up,
Then stands the Prophet by his Altar—then
Bids them o'er victim, base, and trench, to dash

Their barrels from the ocean, ere he call
The GOD of Heaven,—the GOD in Whom we live
And move and have our being, to reply.
"Hear me, O LORD, and let all Israel know
That Thou hast turned this people's heart to Thee!"
At once across the grey sky redly glared
A cataract of fire: at once the stones
And dust and ocean-wave and victim blazed;
And the great cry rose up from earth to heaven,
—"The LORD is GOD! The LORD, He is the GOD!"
—And now, aweary of his life, he treads
With slow and painful footsteps all the path
That his forefathers went:—and sore bested
By foes that thirsted for his blood, he seeks
The lonely peak and ancient Mount of GOD.
Thence fed by Angels' food, the wanderer comes
To test its ancient fame: hath Sinai's GOD
No fresh deliverance? dwells in Sinai's ridge
No mystic influence yet? Or hath the past
Buried the past, and were the ancient days
A tale of wonder, not a pledge of help?
There, in the darkness of the cave, he rests

Faithless and hopeless:—"Take away my life:
I am not better than my fathers were."
Forth from the LORD'S own seat the tempest came:
The wild ravines re-echoed: aged rocks,
Grey with the lichens of a thousand years,
Fought their last fight against that storm, and fell:
But the LORD was not in the wind. Then quaked
The ridges where His feet had stood of old:
The mountain trembled: dismal sounds rang out
From its dark womb, and echoed down the vale.
(Such wails he hears, the wandering Bedouin,
What time eve closes in, and deems that moan
The voice of GOD, and awe-struck flies the plain.)
But the LORD was not in the earthquake. Next
A mighty fire was kindled on the brow
Where once His footsteps passed with prints of flame.
Glowed in its light,—for eve was closing in,—
Each nearer peak and shattered pinnacle,
Glowed terebinth and ilex, glowed the cliff
Purple, or deeper crimson,—while within
The ghostly cavern flung fantastic shades.
But the LORD was not in the fire. And then

A still small voice proclaimed the present God.
What dost thou here, Elijah?

O great Mount!
Great with the mysteries of God's earlier voice,
Great, for that on thy statutes, weal or woe,—
Eternal weal, eternal woe,—depend,
Thou stoodest forth of yore, thou standest yet
God's mountain midst all mountains: where His power
Is stamped in characters of living flame,
The birth-place of the Law, the Law of fear,
The law that saith, "This do and thou shalt live:
This do not, thou shalt die." From thee we turn,
From thee and from thy terrors, to the Hill
The nobler Hill, whence hang our golden hopes.
Not thee, contending with the clouds of earth,
Not thee, scarr'd deeply with the change and chance
Of earthly elements, not thee whose frame
Is built on hidden gulfs of fire, we need:
We seek the heavenly Sion: we are come
Unto the city of the Living God,
The innumerable company of saints

And angels in their varying ministry,
The general assembly and the Church
Of all the first-born that are writ in heaven:
And chief and crown and glory of them all,
The LORD Who first went up the Mount of pain,
Ere He ascended the celestial Hill.

Thus from the earthly to the heavenly shrine,
From Sinai on to Sion; from the realm
Of awe and terror to the Land of Love:—
When shall we wake, and waking, find us there?

EGYPT.

1858.

EGYPT.

I.

A MIDNIGHT, such as ne'er before
  Was writ on history's page;
To be proclaimed from shore to shore,
  And sung from age to age!
Along each dim historic line
Of giant statues, half divine,
That lead toward the midmost shrine
  Of Egypt's sleeping kings,
A fierce, wild gleam is on the air;
The tramp of gathering hosts is there;
The torch glows out with murky glare,

And over many a forming square
  Unearthly radiance flings.
For not with banner, not with shout,
  No warrior's pomp nor pride,
At midnight did the LORD go out,
  And Egypt's firstborn died!

II.

O past the power of human speech,
Past utterance of the song to teach,—
How those granitic temples rise
And gloom athwart the quiet skies;
The moon, a pale and sickly disk,
Looks down upon each obelisk,
And throws a shadow gaunt and dim
O'er lines of kingly Anakim,
O'er human pomp and human pride,
And human passions deified:
All so unearthly, all so vast,
All breathing of the mighty past.
Here is the chieftain's latest bed
  Of old heroic story;

The monarch, midst the monarch-dead,
Reposes in his glory.

III.

But not with warrior's pomp and boast
They marshal now, the midnight host:
Far as the plots of verdure smile
Down the green valley of the Nile,
No cot, but on the midnight gale
Pours out its grief, lifts up its wail;
None, where the hot tear is not shed
Upon the loved and first-born dead.
In vain, poor mother, dost thou strive
To keep that little spark alive:
The LORD of Life, the LORD of Death
Claims, for no fault of thine, his breath.
It is that Egypt may be bent
Before the King omnipotent:
It is that Pharaoh's chiefs may own
Jehovah GOD, and Him alone.
In vain to strive, in vain to flee
Thy king's resistless Foe:

'I reck not of the LORD,' saith he,
'And Israel shall not go:'
The nation quails before the stroke
The monarch's madness dared provoke.

IV.

Oh vainly warned! when Nile's great flood
Rolled—miracle of fear!—with blood:
When league past league, on either shore,
Came ripples, thick with clotted gore,
As if in vengeance on their foes
The murdered innocents arose.
Oh who may paint that fearful sky
When clouds grew dark, and winds grew high,
The day when threatened judgment came
In sheets of mingled hail and flame!
Upon the tender crop it drove,
That sleet of solid ice;
It shattered, in the idol-grove,
The gods of man's device:
All through the cavern's dim profound
Echoed that thunder's mighty sound;

And pealed and pealed again its roar
Through sepulchre and corridor.
Oh fearful judgment from on high
With unresisted sway!
The LORD is fighting from on high
Against the sons of clay.

V.

Day comes again: but such a morn
From Eastern clouds was never born,
As when, from Afric's torrid sand,
The desert-swarms, a monster band,
Came pouring o'er that cursed land,
That miserable race:*
With eyes that sparkled living fire,
Monsters unknown and portents dire,
Came hurrying on apace.
Such visions, in the dead of night,
Crowd o'er the sick man's aching sight,
And, as he longs for morning light,
In feverish dreams have place.

* Reference is made to the tradition of the Jews, corroborated by the Book of Wisdom (xvi. 3), that the *swarms* of Exod. viii. 20 were swarms of *beasts*, not of *flies*.

O God, Whom all things serve alike,
How many ways hast Thou to strike!
How many means to overthrow
And grind to dust Thy strongest foe!

VI.

On Goshen's land the morning broke
In light, and life, and beauty;
And blithely Goshen's sons awoke
To toil in that day's duty:
Upon the ripples of the Nile
The Eastern sunbeams twinkled;
And from the pasture-land the while
The merry sheep-bells tinkled;
In all its glory flowed along
The old majestic river;
And thanks arose in prayer and song
To that day's Lord and Giver:
The voice of children at the tank,—
The shout of honest labour,—
The feet that turned the water-crank
Cheered up by pipe and tabor:

The work goes on, the sport proceeds
So gaily and so brightly;
No insect skims, o'er water-weeds,
More merrily and lightly.

VII.

Anguish, terror, woe and error,
Over Zoan's people shed:
Desolation fills the nation,
'Tis a city of the dead;
All is fearful, all is lonely;
Darkness, utter darkness only!
Darkness, ink-like, pitchy darkness,
Darkness making hearts to melt;
Awful darkness, outer darkness,
Darkness such as may be felt.
Nature's self seems past and o'er,
Darkness, darkness evermore.

VIII.

O hardened heart, that still provokes
The Great Avenger's ceaseless strokes!

The terror of nine plagues is past:
And yet remains the worst and last.
One fate on palace and on hall,
  On cottage and on shed:
The firstborn stay and hope of all
  In one great night lies dead!
Such night as never was before,
Such night as never shall be more.
Now Israel's ransomed tribes may go,
Themselves thrust out in Egypt's woe:
God bids: the mighty East wind blows
  The Red sea wave to sever;
—This morn may ye behold your foes,—
  But not again for ever!

IX.

I tell not now the glorious night
That saw Jeshurun's victor-flight:
How on each side the sea stood high
A rampart, azure as the sky:
Above,—the light waves rippling hoary,—
Beneath,—that wall's crystalline glory.

Six hundred thousand chosen men
Entered, at eve, that horrid glen:
The cloudy pillar went before,
The LORD'S sure guide from shore to shore:
While frenzied now, but unsubdued,
All Egypt, man and horse, pursued.
Nor tell I how, as on they wind,
At midnight came the cloud behind,
And cast unutterable woe
Of terror on the advancing foe:
And poured a radiance calm and bright
O'er Israel, as on festal night.
The monarch's heart with terror reels,
  Shrink back in awe the brave:
The LORD struck off their chariot wheels
  That heavily they drave:
Then, echoed by the stone-like sea,
Rose the wild outcry,—'Let us flee!'
Too late! too late! O man of GOD,
Stretch out once more the mystic rod!
In vain they bend their backward way,
  In vain retreat endeavour;

Them Israel may behold to-day,
But not again for ever.

X.

The battle hath been fought and won;
The LORD hath dealt the blow:
And gladly towards the rising sun
The ransomed people go:
And many a year and many an age
Sweeps over Zoan's heritage,
And many a chief of fame is hid
Within the awful pyramid;
But still, through circling times, the priests
Serve ancient gods with ancient feasts,
And worship still with honour due
Osiris and his demon crew.
Meanwhile Judæa's prophet-lays
Foretel their fall in coming days;
And Mede and Persian from afar
Cry on the chace and urge the war
With battle-axe and scymetar
'Gainst Egypt's rites divine:

Down with the giant forms of old,
Monarch and god together rolled:
Nor spoil of gems, nor bribe of gold,
  Can save each idol-shrine.
Morning may rise with purple wings;
  But never more shall float
The sound which sun-touched Memnon flings,
  That sweet mysterious note:
For shrine and temple are defaced
In undistinguishable waste.

XI.

Let those who list it, rather sing
The pride of Egypt's second spring:
When buried learning rose again,
And poets struck the venal strain;
And girt with many a princely quay
Fair Alexandria ruled the sea;
Until her merchant flag was furled
Before the Empress of the world:
And Egypt felt the destined fate
  A patriarch's voice had spoke;

And stooping from her princely state
Received a victor's yoke:
Long had that doom been writ above,
When all the world was lost for love.

XII.

I rather turn from scenes like this
To Him Whose woe hath wrought our bliss:
Who left that high eternal throne
To share our mortal lot:
And when He came amidst His own
His own received Him not.
For not alone in Canaan's land
His blessed Footsteps trod:
But Egpyt's old benighted strand
Received the coming GOD.
No herald hastened to proclaim
And blaze abroad His mighty name;
No gathering clouds did honour meet,
And bowed them down before His feet;
An Infant snatched from blood and strife
Seeks for the exile's wretched life:

But never yet did nation bring
Such welcome to a victor king.*
He passed the boundary of the Land—
  She knew her Sovereign well:
In every shrine from strand to strand
  The idol reel'd and fell:
Their reign is o'er, their work is done:
'From Egypt have I called My Son!'

XIII.

Arm of the LORD that wast mighty of yore,
What! is the day of thy victories o'er?
Egypt and Egypt's innumerous force,
Monarch and warrior, rider and horse,
Dared in the steps of Thy people to tread,—
Sank in the mighty abysses as lead!
Fiercer than Pharaoh the monarch that now
Bids to his idols Thine Israel bow:
Come to their succour, O GOD, as of old!†

* Allusion is made to the legend that, when our LORD entered the land of Egypt, every idol fell prostrate in its temple.

† The following lines refer to the Tenth Persecution, which raged, perhaps, with greater fury in Egypt, than in any other part of the world.

Wilt Thou not fight for the sheep of Thy fold?
Let not him, counting our gain to be loss,
Spurn at the Monarch Who died on the Cross:
God of all victory! rise and lay low
As in the days of past ages, the foe!

XIV.

He wills not, as in other days,
Such trophies of His might to raise:
Another war must now be tried,
O follower of the Crucified!
This is the triumph *thou* must win,
To suffer, rather than to sin.
All pangs to bear, all woes to dare,
To yield thy lingering breath,
And with the Son of God to share
The highest victory, Death!

XV.

Thou canst not, impotent of heart,
Tax as thou wilt thy demon-art,

So much inflict, as, be thou sure,
A Christian Martyr will endure.
Go! bid the theatre be deck'd
As for a festal day,—
And try thou, if the LORD'S elect
Thy mandate will obey:
Go! summon round the Cæsar's Throne
Thy chosen ones to bend;
The GOD of Hosts is with His own,
And will be to the end.
Command each cursed engine near,—
A woman shews no woman's fear;
The child a sea of pain may stem
For that eternal diadem:
They well may shame and woe despise
Who have a mansion in the skies.

XVI.

The legend was told in the days of old,
How the fifty wise men met;
And in strength divine, Saint Katherine
Was before the tribunal set.

And she spake of the gods, (if gods they be,
Whom we neither may love nor fear,)
That have eyes indeed, but cannot see,
That have ears, but cannot hear:
And their power and their hate we may well contemn,
Who can neither do good nor ill;
And they that make them are like to them,
In spite of their boasted skill:
How the Cæsar sat on the judgment-seat,
And called for the flame and the steel;
And bade them bind her hands and feet
Upon the tormenting wheel:
But the lightning flashed, and the thunder rolled,
By the God of Vengeance sent,
And the fire descended, as once of old,
And the wheel in pieces rent;
And beautiful angels came down from on high,
As in death she calmly lay,
And bare her corpse to Mount Sinai
In Arabia far away:
And they laid her within the rock-hewn cave,
For the days of her strife were o'er:

And the church that arose above that grave
Shall be famous evermore!

XVII.

Thus saith the legend that we deem
A lovely and a pious dream;
But this I doubt not—Angels' love
Conveys them from the realm above,
To succour those who nobly die
A sacrifice to GOD on high:
And doubly glorious, doubly blest
Are they who take the martyr's rest.

XVIII.

Yes: and with many a martyr's fate
Was Egypt's country dedicate.*
They fled to many a cave and den,
To many a waste and wild;
They trod in many an unknown glen,
—The mother and her child:

* For the multitude of those who fled into the desert from the Egyptian persecution, and there perished, see *Eusebius*, H. E. viii. 13.

And then they laid them down to sleep,
The sleep that hath no ending;
And there were none to wail and weep,
Beside their bed attending:
The lip of infants vainly pressed
And marvelled at the clay-cold breast,
Until the soul, so free from stain,
So loving and so tender,
That dear, dear mother joined again
In heaven's eternal splendour.

XIX.

O day of woe! O fearful loss
When to the Crescent bowed the Cross!
When Islam's swarms spread far and wide
Where Athanasius toiled and died;
And bade the foul impostor teach
Where Cyril's lips were wont to preach.
From Europe pour'd, in endless tide,
The followers of the Crucified,
And three times battling, three times foiled,
At length for Zoan's land they toiled.

They marshall 'neath the saintly king
Who rules his happy France;*
It is a glorious gathering
Of pennon and of lance:
So brave and loving is that soul,
So noble in its self-control,
So snowy pure, that it may be
Well emblemed by its fleur-de-lys.
And Islam's sons are gathering fast,
And Islam's shout is on the blast;
And Almoadan's royal brow
With fear and woe is furrowed now:
And either chief his battle sets
In front of Cairo's minarets.

XX.

The long, long day went wearily;
The long, long night went drearily:
Upon each tent, from the hot sky sent,
The sunbeams fell intensely:

* Reference is made to the Crusade of S. Louis, and its admirable description by the Sieur de Joinville.

Above the camp the evening damp
And fever-fog rose densely:
With the stagnant wave the canal was foul
That the Christian army bounded;
And at night the screech of the sad screech-owl
O'er the Christian army sounded:
When the sun went down o'er the waste of brown,
In mingled sand and cloud,
There were forms, men said, of woe and dread,
Of coffin and hearse and shroud:
Then stalked the plague from tent to tent
Throughout the Christian armament:
A plague by fetid marshes sown,
A plague by human skill unknown,
A plague that sapped, by slow decay,
Each power of life and soul away:
And bred, where'er its anguish ran,
Corruption in the living man.

XXI.

O king! the King of kings denies
That Cairo's towers shall be thy prize:

This be thy triumph,—to endure
  Unmoved thy tribulations;
This be thy victory,—to ensure
  God's own blest crown of patience:
Unsway'd by proffered rope or sword,
Unless the Prophet be adored;
By threat of torture vainly tried
Except thou spurn the Crucified.
Think not the foe can e'er prevail,
  Albeit as victor greeted;
Think not, although thy battles fail,
  That thou canst be defeated!

XXII.

In westering clouds the sun is hid;
Eve gathers round the pyramid:
The twilight flings a parting smile
Upon the broad and glorious Nile:
The sunset breezes rise, and shed
Soft music from the palm-tree's head;
And one light boat with sail and oar
Hath crossed the stream and gained the shore.

—Yes: nowhere else can evening cast
Such great reflections of the past,
As where she glimmered round the path
Of Joseph and of Asenath;
Bade Israel's children cease from toil,
Or saw them rich with Pharaoh's spoil.
—'Tis gone and o'er. I would the strain
That hath call'd up the past again,
And told of that Almighty Hand
So oft stretched out on Zoan's strand,
And tried, too boldly, to relate
Each change and chance of human fate,
Were worthier, land of GOD! to be
A record of the past and thee!

*EGYPT.**

MONARCH of ages, the First and the Last, Whose measureless vision
Joining the Past and the Future in one, (where as infinite rivers,
Here, in a moment of time, their two eternities mingle,)
This by Thy Saints hast writ, and *that* by Thy Prophets foretellest;
Oh what a moment of time, what a brief-told span of existence
Thou hast appointed for man! Though he mete out the path of the comet,
Measure the depths of the sea, and number the stars of the heaven,

* A further Prize was adjudged to these hexameters.

Triumph o'er time, and annihilate space! If his years Thou hast shortened
Since their duration at first, 'twas not harshly, O GOD, nor severely;—
Who in the passage to Life, (for what is this life but a passage
Out of the storm into calm, to our own dear Country from exile,
Into the region of joy from the kingdom of sorrow,) would linger?
There is the goal of our race, the reward and the end of our contest;
There is the happy array of the souls made perfect through suffering:
There is the realm where tempests are not,—where Paradise blossoms,
Where GOD's Noon is eternal, and GOD's own Spring everlasting.
Oh how they beckon us on,—those former and earthly companions
Who have put off the corruptible now, and assumed the eternal,—

Oh how they call us away from this earth's poor lures and enticements,
Perishing when at the brightest, no sooner enjoyed than departed!
This is the voice of their love, as they point to the infinite future,
—"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the First Resurrection!"

Yet would I fain,—(for autumnal repose and the glory of sunset
Call back the years that are gone in thoughts not gloomy but solemn,)
Now that, a monarch in death, the great sun draws to his setting,
Decking the earth with his beauty and kindling the sky with his splendour,
Fain would I turn to the realm of the past; that marvellous kingdom
Where, when the midnight shall come, this day, now dying in beauty,
Shall, in the grave of years, be written for ever and ever.—

What is the line of monarchs that, far as can history venture,
Looms on th' horizon, a band so ghost-like and shadowy—monarchs
Passing in godlike array athwart the shadows that cradle
Time in his awful departure from out of eternity's bosom?
Mighty indeed that race, and mighty its memories, rising
In the green vale of the Nile, the dead midst the living around them:
Temples august in their granite, and calm great obelisks, soaring
Up from the earth and its din, and statues, huge and majestic,
Statues of deified monarchs, or king-like gods, may I name them?
There is his last long sleep, the Chief and the Priest and the Father,
Heart of the shrine and its worship: himself in cornice and passage,

Trampling the proud in his wrath, or raising the meek in his mercy:

There in the pillar sublime, the lawgiver seated in judgment

Executes justice for all: there lastly, as earth is departing,

Gently received by the gods as a god, was his earthly entombment.

Spring should come down on the fields, and summer should fade into autumn,

Thousand-fold thousands of times, (so intended the skill of the builder,)

While, in the midst of the shrine, undisturbed, untended, decayless,

Sleeping the infinite sleep, the monarch reposed in his glory.

None should behold those walls, none gaze on the wild decorations,

Sacred to silence and night, till the king should awake from his slumbers,

Then, when the earth and sky should be mingled together in ruin.

Who hath o'erthrown those temples? Who scattered
in measureless fragments
Idol, and pillar, and sphinx into heaps of eternal
confusion,
Dashing the statues of kings into grinning deformity,
mingling
Granite, and marble, and clay with the fierce wild
sweep of a whirlwind?
Tremble, ye idols of Egypt! The mighty avenger
approaches:
Tremble, ye priests of the stock and the stone; let
them rise, let them save you,
If they have ears for your prayers, if victims and
hymns be availing!
Where are the soldiers of yore? Let the long, long
lines of the archers
Stand in the front of the war; let them shoot, as
they shot at Megiddo,*
When to the grave of his youth they hurried the
ruler of Sion,

* 2 Chron. xxxv. 22, 23.

Him that was faithful alone in a faithless and ill generation.

Vainly they marshal for battle: the shout of the Mede and the Persian

Daunting each spirit, and chilling each sense, grows louder and louder:

Bel boweth down to his fate, and Nebo stoopeth to ruin.

Laden with gold and with jewels the camels are treading the desert,

Weary with those vast loads of capital, cornice, and pillar,

Destined to serve in the victor's abode. Hence, ruin on ruin;

Hence, when the sun sinks low, and the purple and African desert

Glows as the steel on the anvil,—the long slant rays of the sunbeam,

Mournfully gilding the ruin, makes sadder the sad desolation.

Music is hushed in those halls; the voice of the bride and the bridegroom

Never shall echo again; no light of a candle shall glimmer;

Beasts of the desert are there, and owls in their desolate places.

Marvellous still is the scene, though its youth and its strength have departed:

Man may pass by and his works, but the flow of the stream is eternal:*

Cradled in silence, and lapped in obscurity, onward and onward

Winding or forcing its way through dim and impassable mountains,

Peaks unknown and untrodden, mysterious Crophi and Mophi,†

Then, in convulsion and jar, with writhing and feverish waters,

Struggling and panting along, where the cataract, wonderful portal,

* . . . . . immota labascunt:
Et quæ perpetuo sunt agitata, manent.
Janus Vitalis.

† Herodotus, II. 28. *μεταξὺ Συήνης τε πόλιος κείμενα τῆς Θηβαΐδος, δυό οὔρεα, καὶ Ἐλεφαντίνης· οὐνόματα δὲ εἶναι τοῖσι οὔρεσι, τῷ μὲν,* Κρῶφι, *τῷ δέ,* Μῶφι.

Opens its beautiful way thro' the fair green valley of Egypt.

Egypt, unchanged and unchangeable land! since the days of thy glory

Oh what mutation of earth, what rise and extinction of nations!

There where the forest primeval was stretched, with the gnarl of its branches

Shadowing acre on acre, a deep green ocean of verdure,

Commerce hath wedded together the flame and the water, combining

City and city in one; and with more than the speed of the lightning

Darting, o'er mountain and vale, the thought and the word and the action.

There, by the deep sea-shore, where was nought but the wearisome ripple,

Hour after hour, of the wave, and the lonesome scream of the sea-gull,

Now is the clang of the dock, the voice of the mallet and hammer,

Clamping and clenching the planks that shall ride
the queen of the ocean.
Thou wast the same, O land of the past! thy obe-
lisks pointed
Up to the noontide sun,—thy sphinxes, in terrible
beauty,
Guarded the shrine and its gate, when Ishmael's
merchantmen entered
Bearing their spices and myrrh, and leading the
captive and bondman,
Him that was sold from the pit in the distant valley
of Dothan.
Strong in the strength of thy GOD, be faithful amidst
the unfaithful;
Bear yet awhile that dungeon! A mightier captive
than thou art,
Suffers in type with thee; He is taken from prison
and judgment,
Yet in the end to the throne, the eternal throne is
exalted!

—Beautiful season of old, when down and valley
and hillside

Yielded a place for his flocks, while the great oak, stretching her branches
Over the greensward round, was the Patriarch's home for a season.
Here was the light tent pitch'd, the earth gave treasure of water:
Here was the altar erected to GOD: while pastoral princes
Came with their proffer of peace, and knelt at the shrine of El-Bethel.*
Now for awhile farewell to the plain of beautiful Canaan:
GOD hath commanded, Advance! O'er the earth the famine is raging;
Only in Zoan is food: and with visions of peace and of plenty
Happier tidings arrive,—too happy at first for reception,
'Joseph is yet alive; is alive, and is Lord over Egypt!
Bravely the brave old man goes forth with the tribes of the future:

* Gen. xxxv. 7.

Casting his all upon GOD, Whose word is his light and his waymark

Now, as in years long past: 'for certainly I will be with thee;

'I will go down with thy steps, and again will bring thee to Canaan.'

Thus, when an evening of calm, succeeding the day of the tempest,

Pours through the rifts of the clouds the marvellous glory of sunset,

Gilding each hard dark edge, and melting the mist into silver;

Then earth sends to the sky her great oblation of incense;

Sparkles the tree and the flower; the birds chant gladly their Vespers;

Greener the green mead glows, more azure the blue of the æther:—

Thus is the calm fair end of a life so chequered with chances.

Now o'er the waste of the sand he beholds the pyramids gleaming;

Now is enwrapped in those dear, dear arms: now Goshen the happy,
Goshen the best of the land, the home of the future, is round him.
Year after year rolls on; the little ones bloom into youthhood,
Youth into man's ripe strength, and the full ripe vigour of manhood
Melts into eld: while still, the Prince and the Priest of his people,
Jacob awaits his call; and expects the repose of the righteous.

When shall the season draw nigh,—the season foretold? What chieftain
Bursting the dungeon and loosing the chain, shall deliver Jeshurun?
Arm of the LORD! it is time to awake: the bondage is bitter,
Heavy and sore is the yoke wherewith they burden Thy people!
Is not Thine own word pledged, that years four hundred and thirty

Rolling away, shall redeem Thy flock? O remember
Thy promise;
Think of the Saints of the past: of the Saints, O GOD
of the living,
Dwelling with Thee in the peace of Thy home, and
deliver their children!

Oh what a night was that, what a night to be
ever recorded,
When from the seat of the LORD went forth the
Mandate of Judgment!
When the Eternal Word,* as a warrior armed for the
slaughter,
Leapt from his throne, and stood on the earth, but
reached to the heaven!
Death in the courts of the palace, and death in the
hut of the bondman:
Everywhere, everywhere, death. The sad low wail
of the firstborn
Hangs on the midnight air, while the pitiless angel
of sorrow

* Wisdom xviii. 15, 16.

Stays not and knows not to spare. No avail in the skill of physician;
Vain is the prayer of devotion, and vain the voice of affection.
But, in the LORD's own land, with the LORD's own people, is gladness,
Where the mysterious blood is sprinkled on lintel and doorpost,
Warding the stroke of death. They eat the mystical supper,
Standing, and sandalled, and hasty of mien, and girt for departure.
(So, when the world and its deeds shall be o'er, when the angel of judgment
Summons the quick and the dead, woe! woe! where the Paschal Oblation
Hath not besprinkled each soul,—thence writ with the reprobate people!)

Now there is forming of lines, and the blast of the trumpet at midnight;
Torches glare out in the streets; they marshal by tribes and by houses:

Borrow ye jewels of gold, saith the LORD, and jewels of silver;

As she hath spoil'd, so let her be spoil'd: oppress the oppressor:

Gather the double of all, in the hour of her just retribution.

Hurriedly sweeps the array, where the voice of the ruler directs it,

Billow on billow, instinct with life: still onward and onward

Take they the desolate way of the wild, by Succoth and Etham.

Who shall protect them now? The chariots and horses of Egypt

Thunder behind, and the deep is before, and the wail of the trumpet,

Prancing of steeds, and shout of the foe, wax louder and louder.

Then from the Throne of GOD, that Throne, where the weary have refuge,

Where in the midst of distress there is calm, that mandate was uttered,

—Mandate not uttered alone that day for the thousands of Judah,—
But to all ages addressed, and to all generations, "Go forward!"
FORWARD, when all seems lost, when the cause looks utterly hopeless;
FORWARD, when brave hearts fail, and to yield is the rede of the coward;
FORWARD, when friends fall off, and enemies gather around thee;
Thou, though alone with thy GOD, though alone in thy courage, GO FORWARD!
Nothing it is with Him to redeem or by few or by many:
Help, though deferred, shall arrive; ere morn the night is at darkest.

Oh what a wonderful sight, as the wild sea, hither and thither,
Piled itself up, and was raised in a heap! A horror of gladness
Thrilled through the host, as, on this side and that, the obedient water

Stood like an adamant wall, with a dark, deep valley
below it:
Valley, where coralline trees stretched out their
branches of beauty.
But on each face of the pile, so glassy and golden
together,
Now (for it drew to the eve) were the westering
sunbeams reflected.
Yea, in what marvellous tints, through the very abyss
of the ocean,
Struck they and pierced they and lingered! What
hues of crimson and jasper
Shaded away, or commingling, led onward and onward
the vision
Into the far sea depth! what soft and violet pulses
Quivered afar through the mass, instinct with glory
and splendour!
Marvels unknown till then: for *till* then never had
Nature
Opened the sea-nymphs' hall, and revealed the palace
of ocean.
Tribes of the LORD, advance! the Pillar of Cloud
is before you!

Go, where your God shall lead!

And night hath come down in her blackness.

Only the deep tramp, tramp of the hosts, and the shout of the captains,

Neighing of steeds, and thunder of car. Now woman and childhood

Wearily, wearily drag their steps; while fiercer and gladder,

Deeming the prey in their clutch, press on those thousands of Egypt.

Woe for the faint and the few! When lo! the pillary vapour,

(Just as the midnight divides the departing day from the morrow,)

Hitherto leading the van, now fearfully swoops to the rearward,

Right between host and host. On Zoan ineffable terror

Poured from that horrible cloud, as its congregate masses of blackness

Swirled through the labouring air: but gladness and glory on Judah,

Such as the Presence of GOD streams down on the
Seats of the Blessed.

Glowed in its radiance the host: glowed banner and
armour and buckler;
Squadron and line of advance glowed out: on the
watery bulwark
Flickered and trembled the broken array and frag-
ments of splendour.
Ah! but the Form! That Form that looked on the
army of Egypt
Forth from the pillar of cloud, to distract and to
madden and frenzy?
Then fell terror on hearts that *till* then never had
trembled:
Then blanched lips that had never grown pale: the
chariots of Memphis
Heavily, heavily, heavily drave: their wheels were
shattered;
Blended were horse and foot. 'Let us flee! let us
flee!' was the outcry:
'Back, for the LORD is with them and battles against
the Egyptian!'

Woe, for the word *Too late!* Ah, bitterly, bitterly uttered,
Then when the harvest is past, and the summer is ended for ever!
One little moment of time, one brief imperceptible second,
Closes the portal of hope: Here, none but the desperate enter!
Back on the wreck of the host rush down those mighty abysses;
Back on the king and the prince; back, back on the horse and the rider:
One wild shriek of despair; and then that silence for ever.

Oh for the vision that once came down by the river of Chebar,*
Teaching the Son of Man of past and present and future!
Then with a pencil of light might I picture the course of the ages

* Ezekiel i. 3.

Such as the pyramids saw!

By the mouth of the River of Egypt

Rises the merchant queen, that had sway o'er the sea of the inland.

Over the tideless waves went forth those vessels of commerce,

Visiting island and port, as far as the Pillars of Atlas;

Yea, with undaunted prow stemming boldly against the Atlantic,

Coasting the shores of the West, till they entered the Bay of Ulysses:*

Or, more adventurous still, their carved beak turned to the southward,

Anchored they under Madeira, the sweetest Isle of the Ocean.

Learning awakes from her sleep where the Ptolemy wieldeth the sceptre;

Echo again some few faint strains of the poets of Hellas;

* Ulyssipolis, that is, Lisbon.

Though the sweet source of the song be dried, still harmony lingers,
Oh how poor, how faint, how weak, ere dying for ever!
Now o'er the land of the Nile is the Western Eagle triumphant;
Now is the mart of the earth, and the world's great granary, Roman;
Marvellous change! But a change more marvellous time in its fulness
Hurries along; when the Cross shall o'erthrow the altars of Egypt;
When to the Name and the fame of the Crucified dedicate, temples
Shall in the city lift up their head; in the desolate places
Hallow the soil that was once the domain and abode of Osiris.
Oh what a fight to the death! What glorious conflict of martyrs!
Oh what a struggle of Satan! What rage and despair of the fiend-gods!

When to the rack men went, as the victor might
go to a triumph,
Hugging each engine of pain as a bride; in the
theatre stood they
Waiting the rush and the roar of the beast, that
terrible passage
Up to the Vision and Glory of God, the Sight
Beatific.
Tier upon tier rose high with the pitiless multitude
crowded:
Præfect and Consulars sat where the silken and
delicate awning
Shielded the noon-day sun; beneath, in the very
arena,
He that is Martyr of martyrs again was crowned in
His servant.
Nor with the steel and the torture alone was the
battle decided:
Into the wilds they fled, to the desert and cavern
and mountain,
Dying of hunger and thirst, the babe and the mother
together,

Leaving their bones to whiten, a prey to the vulture
and jackal;
Till in the day, when the LORD shall descend in
His terror to judgment,
They shall obey His voice and be glorious for ever
and ever.
—This is the way that they fought, those heroes
of CHRIST and His Kingdom;
This is the way that they conquered, by toil and by
patient endurance:
Therefore they now are before His Seat, where the
River of Pleasure
Springs from the Throne of the LAMB That was
slain, as glassy as crystal;
Where there is no more curse, but on either side of
the River
Groweth the Tree of Life with her twelve fruits, each
in their season;
Where they shall see His Face, and His Name shall
be in their foreheads.

Now is the battle-array that shall crush or the Cross
or the demon;

Where in the great sea-square of the merchant city of princes,
Rises the idol on high, that ancient idol, Serapis,*
Doomed to be struck to the earth,—so saith the command of the Cæsar.
—Who hath the courage to deal that blow? For the prophets of Egypt
Tell, when that image shall fall, how the sky and the ocean shall mingle,
Darkness shall cover the world, and nature return into chaos.
"Give me an axe," saith a firm brave voice. And the multitude cower,
Trembling and shrinking together, and deem that the end is approaching.
"Strike in the Name of the LORD!" And the idol trembles and totters:
Down with it, down to the ground! It falls, but a marvellous thunder
Echoes within that frame. Great terror is over the people;

* See the story in Socrates, H. E. V. 16.

Till from their ancient abode, in myriad, myriad numbers,
Pours forth a cohort of rats. Then peals of measureless laughter;
'These be thy gods, O Egypt!'
The landscape of history darkens:
Pour from the tents of the East his hordes, the Impostor of Mecca:
Glows in the front of their van a land like the Garden of Eden:
Blackens behind their rear a howling and terrible desert.
Now is the land of the Nile yet again the servant of servants,
Mighty in thoughts of the past alone: while the fabrics of ages
Sadly and dimly look down on the hopes and the schemes of the future.
Relics of Pharaoh's renown, how strangely they blend and commingle
Into the present, the great highways of peace and of commerce,

Where from our country are sent her commands to the world of the Sunrise,
Where from the sea to the sea go forth the telegraph flashes!

LORD of the Past and the Future, Whom history preaches and blesses,
Who by Thy wisdom uphold'st Thine own through the perils of this world!
Still, when a Pharaoh attacks, raise up for Thy people a Moses;
Still let the Red Sea wave be a path of escape for Thy Ransomed;
Still through the desert lead on, still sever the waters of Jordan;
Till they obtain, at the last, their promised inheritance, CANAAN!

THE DISCIPLES AT EMMAUS.

1859.

THE DISCIPLES AT EMMAUS.

Why from the western clouds walks Evening forth
In such transcendent hues? Why sinks the Sun
Behind Judæa's hills, in such array
Of golden majesty, that never yet
Eneglaim's* fisher saw that sullen lake
Clad in such living purple as to-day?
That Bethlehem's shepherd—(as he shades his eyes,
And marks how Light and Beauty interweave
Their delicate threads of opal in the West
Round those strong bars of crimson,)—lifts his heart,
And blesses God Who made the world so fair?

* Ezekiel xlvii. 10. "The fishers shall stand upon it"—the Dead Sea—"from Engedi even unto Eneglaim."

—O Nature, cursed of old for man's offence!
O God's Creation, once so beautiful,
So perfect in thy beauty,—since defiled
By man's defiler!—well thou may'st to-day
Gird thee with festal splendour, tire thy brow
With living light, and pour thy beauty forth!
Now the first time, the very first of all,
The great sun sets upon a ransomed earth:
Sees man redeem'd, and God victorious: sees
Captivity led captive, Death by death
O'erwhelm'd, and Life out-bursting from the Grave.

There is one spot, a spot the Angels know,
—O touch it gently, thou red messenger
Of beauty from the West! with softest kiss
Salute each hallow'd blade! It now is clad
With evening's gems, but three days since was decked
With that tremendous dew of Blood, which spake
The death-throes of an agonizing God:
'Twas there the strife began: there face to face
He stood, Whose purer eyes abhor all guilt,
With heap'd-up centuries of transgression, crime

Of untold generations, stretching back
To that first sin that lost us Paradise
And brought in death,—and forwards, length'ning out
In vista, hideous and more hideous yet,
To the last deed of violence that shall be
Before the Archangel's Trumpet! And He knelt
With Head bow'd down on that most holiest spot,
That anchorage of every soul,—and said,
If it be possible,—oh prayer thrice breathed
In Agony that only GOD can know!—
Let this cup pass away: yet not My Will
But Thine be done.—And where were mortals then?
Where were the Victor's glory? where the Name
Exalted o'er all names of things in Heav'n,
And things on earth, and things beneath the earth:
The One, the Only Name wherein is life
And strength and love and comfort?

Aye! exult,
Exult, O Sun, and leap for joy, O Earth!
Oh how transfigured now, since, three days erst,
Sweet light extinct at high noon, dim eclipse
Dragged on, o'er mountain range and desert sand,

And labouring ox, and bright spring beds of flowers,
And young green woods, the funeral pall of GOD:
What time the Athenian sage,* amidst the band
Of pale disciples, shiv'ring in their fear,
"Or this world's GOD is suffering, or the frame
"Of this world's self," he said, "is breaking up!"
What time—for some believe the marvellous tale,†—
His vessel bounding o'er the wine-dark sea,
The pilot Tamois heard that voice,—"Whene'er
"Thy galley nears Phalacrum's stormy cape,
"Proclaim thou from the prow,—'Great Pan is dead!'"
Nay! speed the vessel! spread all canvas! woo
Each favouring breeze, and fly the dangerous coast!
—Vain human forethought! vain the seaman's art!
Soon as the white cliff beetles o'er the deep,
Fails the fair breeze: the sails droop idly down:
And Tamois, now a bowshot from the coast,
Afraid to disobey, yet loth to speak,

* Allusion is made to the well-known tale that S. Dionysius the Areopagite burst forth into such an exclamation when observing the miraculous eclipse at our Blessed Lord's Crucifixion.

† The story of Tamois is related by Plutarch in his work on the Cessation of Oracles: and Tiberius is by that author said to have enquired into the truth of the tale from the lips of Tamois himself.

Makes proclamation that Great Pan is dead.
At once, ten thousand thousand hideous cries
And doleful lamentations,—whispered bans
Of unseen things that flap their spirit-wings
And gibber through the air, and make it sad
With woe and wailing. These infernal Powers
Have learnt the enigmatic lore, and know
Their human empire fall'n.—The breeze springs up;
The vessel onward flies: and queenly Rome
Hath heard, nor understood, the wondrous tale.

Oh pleasant pilgrimage, where arching boughs
Talk to each other, and the breeze,—of spring
With all its soft young beauty! There the fig
Puts forth its milky leaves—the cactus there
Bristles with oar-like petals; while the copse
Echoes the bulbul's full delicious notes,
And all is vernal joy.—But who are these,
Twain pilgrims, as it seems, that, slow and sad,
Leaving the Holy City, and the pile
Of snowy glory, tow'ring o'er the abyss
On this side and on that, majestic shrine

Of prayer for nations, where the Paschal Feast
As yet invites to worship, wend their way
To fair Emmaus?—Hark! their talk, the while,
Is of a King, esteemed the Son of God,
Who yet hath yielded to the Law of Man:
Is of a great Deliverer, That could save
Others, it seems, but could not save Himself:
Is of a mighty Prophet, That could stay
Diseases by a word, could bid the sea
Boiling in maddest fury, to be still,
Command the fiends that torture human frames
Back to their place of torment, yea, restore
Lord of the gates of hell, the dead to life:
Their guide, their friend, their ruler. Where are now
His promises of Love? Where now their hopes
Of many mansions in His Father's House?
Their Head is gone,—their visions fled,—for He,
By most unrighteous judgment doom'd, hath died
That shameful death, the malefactor's Cross,
Accounted with transgressors: yea, to-day
Is the third day since all these things were done.
What is to them the splendour of the sky,

The loveliness of spring?—The sun that sets
So glorious now, shall rise more glorious still;
The flowers that died in autumn, have assumed
Their newer life, and every tinted leaf
Opes its young channel to the verdurous sap.
For Him is no awak'ning, till the hour
Of Heavenly right, reversing earthly wrong;
The Resurrection of the latter day.
Oh happy hours of converse, when He spake
As man spake never! Oh dear fields and paths
Trod by those blessed feet, thenceafter nailed
Fast to the bitter Cross! Oh pleasant skies
Of blue Gennesaret! obedient waves
Whose midnight surges into peace He trod!
Him by what name must they remember now,
Or Son of God, or Son of Man? If this,
Woe to those hopes whose aim is based on clay!
If that,—can He, the Immortal, taste of death,
The impassible, of suffering? He that holds
The Heaven of Heavens in that Almighty grasp
Be held within the grave?—

Methought that now

In this spring landscape there were pilgrims twain:
And lo! a third is with them; Who draws near
With salutation sweet yet grave, and asks
The cause that hath set sadness on their brow.
"Hast thou not heard,—or hast thou stood aloof
From all the Paschal pilgrims,—of the things
That these last days have brought to every ear?"
"What things?" that Stranger asks. And straight the tide
Of mingled hope and fear and love breaks forth:
How they had hoped that He Who fed the crowds,
Who heal'd the sick, Who still'd the waves, Who held
The keys of hell and death, had been the King,
Jeshurun's promised Monarch: He Whose Throne
Should stretch its sceptred sway from shore to shore,
Yea from the river to the world's confine:
To Whom all kings should bow, Whom every power
Should own supreme, we trusted it was He!
We trusted,—till our hopes were nail'd to that,
The self-same Cross whereon our Master hung.
Yea certain of our company, who bare
No woman's heart with more than woman's love,

Were early at the tomb, whereat they saw
A vision of the Seraphs; and they asked,
Why seek ye thus the Living midst the dead?
The Angels they beheld, and we, who went
Wing'd with their tale, beheld them too: but Him,
The Angels' Monarch, saw we not.
"O fools
And slow of heart," that Stranger said, "who thus
Reject the teaching of prophetic lore!
And ought not He, the Anointed, to have trod
The path of suffering first, ere He assumed
The exceeding glorious and eternal Crown?
Ought He not first to breast the howling waves
Amidst the night of this world, ere at length
The morn now come,* He stands upon the shore?
What other lesson taught they, since of old,
Ere yet the cherubim with fiery sword
Had guarded Eden's entrance, GOD's great love
Promised the Woman's Seed That was to reign,

* Compare S. John xxi. 4. "But when the morning was now come, JESUS stood on the shore:" which is usually applied by the Fathers to the shore of Heavenly rest, and the morning of the Resurrection.

But not before He suffered,—He shall bruise
The serpent's head, but thou shalt bruise His heel?
Why else were all their labours, who were made
Types of the Promised Ruler, but for this?
Why trod he wearily the three days' march,
The long-sought offspring, "Isaac, whom thou lov'st,"
And bare the fire, and bare the wood, but not
The lamb for the burnt-offering: *he* that lamb
Bound on the Altar, while above his son
That glorious father bared the trembling knife?
Why else the thousand victims, pouring out
Their meek and patient lives, and offering up
Their innocence for offences not their own,
While o'er their death rang trumpet peal and shawm,
The psaltery and the cymbal? Oh vast roof
Radiant with gems and gold! oh dim-seen forms
Of Angels brooding o'er the Mercy Seat!
Why on that dreadest hour, that fast of fasts,
The Day of Great Atonement, went the Priest
Into the Holy of the Holies, where
In its unutterable majesty
GOD'S own Shechinah burn'd? Why else the tale

Of Israel's champions, victors by defeat;
Through bondage and through exile and contempt,
And midnight march, and flight of peril, raised,
The good fight fought, to Salem's peaceful throne?"

—Oh how He spake, that Stranger! how His words
Roll'd off the darkness from the byegone times*
And touch'd them with prophetic light!
He shewed
The plain beneath Mount Carmel,† where the glow
Of thousand thousand watchfires lighted up
The stilly midnight, while the warrior sons
Of Edom and of Midian slept the sleep
Of glutted insolence, and dreamed of spoil
Won from a morrow richer than to-day.
But what the arms of GOD's elected chief
And of his brave three hundred? Not the sword
And spear and shield, the warrior's earthly guard;

* S. Luke xxiv. 27. "He expounded unto them, in all the Scriptures, the things concerning Himself." Hence, in the present poem, some of the types are described at length, on which our Blessed LORD may be supposed more particularly to have dwelt.

† Gideon, a type of CHRIST. Judges vii. 16—21.

But pitchers, moulded by the potter's art,
And lamps within the pitchers: "What I do,
That see that ye do also." Then the cry,
"The sword of Gideon and of GOD!" the crash
Of shattered pitchers, and the glare that burst
Upon the midnight host; while round and round,
Now here, now there, that shout's great thunder rose,
"The sword of GOD and Gideon!"—Even thus,
Almighty Conqueror, didst Thou seek the foe
Amidst the night of this world: even thus,
The mortal vessel shattered gloriously,
Flash'd forth the Godhead! Yea, and they that bear
Thy Name, must do Thy deeds: must freely yield
This mortal frame to anguish and to death,
If this Thy call, and fear not them that kill,
And after that have nought that they can do:
Oh glorious lot of Martyrs!—Yet not less
They tread His footsteps, who for Him endure
A life-long death; who spend and who are spent
In labour, mocked at by the world,—in strife
Both with the ill within them and without:
In self-denial that, by slow degrees,

Wearing the mortal vessel out, at length
Shall unimprison the internal light.

Anon He led them in His god-like talk
To Dagon's temple,* where the shouting crowd
Bade the imprisoned warrior make them sport;
Captive, and blind, and fettered, there he stands,
A spectacle of woe; yet none the less
Retains the unconquerable will, to die
Himself, and by his death destroy the foe.
On those twain pillars of the house he leans,
And makes his prayer: "Remember me, O GOD,
This once, O GOD, and strengthen me this once,
Only this once, that I may be avenged,
And with the dying Philistines may die."
One lengthened hideous tug, and down they come,
The pillars of the temple, crashing in
On those besotted thousands. So the dead
His death, were more than those his life, destroyed.
—Not less, O glorious Captive, didst Thou hang
A spectacle to angels, on that Cross,

* Samson, a type of CHRIST. Judges xvi. 25—30.

The watch-tower of the world, the whilst Thy hands,
Nailed to its bitter wood, for us burst through
The fetters of damnation, crushed for us
By death the reign of death, and brought forth life;
Life without sickness, life without end, life
Such as the angels live, and next to GOD.

Still were those travellers' ears attent, although
The westering sun gave warning that the eve
Must send the latest incense of her flowers,
The latest music of her birds, to heaven.
Forthwith that unknown Friend—(for friend He was,
Who poured in comfort on the orphaned men,
As holy morn pours light and warmth and joy
On utter darkness)—shifts the scene, and shows
Philistia's hosts and Israel's, face to face
Stretched in the valley of the Terebinth,†
And shouting for the battle. Hope on those,
Secure of victory, sits: these sullen shame

* David, a type of CHRIST. 1 Sam. xvii.

† 1 Sam. xvii. 2. "The valley of Elah:" rather "of *the* Elah," that is, of the Terebinth tree.

Weighs down, and fear that dares not tempt defeat.
For lo! the enormous champion tow'rs along,
Matchless in brutal strength, sole relic now
Of those gigantic demigods who erst
Held sway o'er Canaan. How he belches forth
Words of fierce scorn and bitter biting jeers
Against the people of the LORD Most High,
Against the LORD Himself!—But why repeat
That tale of nursery-faith,* which infants hear
Half-pleased, half-frightened, while the firelight throws
Fantastic shadows round them, and the wind
Goes rioting forth upon the Sunday Eve
Of howling Mid-November! They the while
Pillow their head upon the Mother's breast,
And in that warm white nest shut out the sight
Of great Goliath, and the brazen glare
Of shield and sword and terrible weaver's beam.
A tale of nursery-lore: yet tale fulfilled
In its deep strength, when He, the Infant, born
In David's City, Bethlehem, went to meet
The fierce Goliath of the human race.

* "Twined to the people's pious nursery-faith."—WALLENSTEIN.

But not as warriors go, with noise confused,*
And garments rolled in blood; with captains' shout
And thunder of the battle: but despised,
A poor man midst the poor, He gently dropped
His Majesty, the friend of sinners still;
Till in the final conflict, drinking first
The brook of deep affliction by the way,†
He conquered; with Goliath's sword cut off‡
Goliath's head, by toil abolished toil,
By woe wiped off all tears, by death slew death,
By rising, raised us to eternal life.

Thus called He up the champions, one by one,
Whose mortal course prefigured His, the CHRIST'S:
And cheered those faithful two by many a proof
That He must suffer ere He reigned.—But then,
Just as the sun went down beneath the hills,
He touched the "more sure word of prophecy:"
How David, in his ecstasy,‖ beheld

* Isaiah ix. 5. † Psalm cx. 7.

‡ The slaughter of Goliath with his own sword, so continually taken by early commentators, of death destroyed by death.

‖ Psalm xxii.

Messiah's Agony,—the hands and feet
Pierced by the bitter nails; the frame so racked;
Each member so distorted; gall His meat,
And vinegar His drink. And next to him,
The son of Amoz told his sadder tale:
He is rejected and despised of men,
A man of sorrows and acquaint with grief:
And we esteemed Him not: His face was marred
More than the sons of men;—'twas marred for us;
For surely, surely, He hath borne our griefs
And carried all our sorrows!* He in death
Was with the malefactor, but His grave
Among the rich and noble.

Come thou forth,
O Daniel!† and declare the time, ordained
Before the world was, when to save that world,
Messiah for its guilt shall be cut off.
The seventy weeks are ended: needs must CHRIST
Have entered on His Work.—The twelve-fold band
Repeat the self-same tale,—from him that sank,
Gulphed in that ocean-shouldering monster's maw,

* Isaiah liii. † Daniel ix. 26, 27.

Down to the bottom of the mountains,—thence
Called up from black despair, to light and joy,—
To him who hailed the Conqueror o'er the Grave,*—
Death! I will be thy Death! (Oh glorious song!
Repeat it, Earth, with all thy thousand tongues,
And hail it, Heaven!) O Grave, behold and own
Thy great Destroyer!

Thus that Stranger spoke:
And as He spoke, a glorious vision brake
Upon the twain.

As when the pilgrim gropes
His doubtful way through thunder-fog and mist
Down terrible Y Wyddfa,†—where each step
Is peril, where each pause is utter doubt,
And error is destruction,—if perchance
The western breeze lifts off that vaporous skirt
High from the double summit, then each range
Of circling mountains laughs in sunlit joy,
While the clear path shoots downward, and below
Basks sweet Llanberris in the summer eve:—

* Hosea xiii. 14.
† Y Wyddfa: "The Conspicuous;" the highest point of Snowdon.

So from their souls fled agony and doubt,
And in its stead came love and joy and peace,
And their hearts burnt within them. They meanwhile
Have reached their journey's goal; a peasant's cot
Where myrtle breathes out fragrance, and the snow
Of orange bloom alternates with the gold
Of the ripe fruit, while vines, from elm to elm,
Fling the young beauty of their tendrils out.
"Abide with us," they say; "the day is spent;
"Abide with us, and rest." He set His Face
Towards the upland slope, where yet abide
The sentinels of twilight: still they urge
Redoubling their petition.

As He yields,
The board is spread: and at the frugal meal
They stand, and give GOD thanks: then sit and eat.
Nay! mark that Stranger now! He taketh bread,
He blesseth, and He breaketh.

And their eyes
Are opened, and they know Him!

It is He,
The LORD of Whom they spake: the LORD That died,

And rose again; and lives for evermore.
And He hath vanished!
Oh to see Him yet!
"Did not our hearts burn in us as He shewed
How Moses and the Prophets speak of Him,
His Death and Victory?"—That same hour they rise,
And lighted by the Paschal Moon, that now
Floods holy Olivet with trembling light,
Wend back towards the City. There the Eleven
Had met this eve in silence and in fear,
With doors fast locked, lest enemies intrude.
Two days agone, "Though all men," was their boast,
"Reject Thee and deny Thee, yet not we:"
And they forsook the first!—And what if now
They who forgat Him be by Him forgot?
What if the golden chain of love be snapped?—
Nay, never, never deem it! This His Law:
Loving His own, He loves them to the end.
Meanwhile, up hill, through copse, down vale, they go
Where lately He was with them: on they press
With this one yearning hope, to tell the tale
That shall remove all fear and end all doubts.

Now they have reached the portal, now they meet
The challenge of the soldier: now they tread
The dim and silent city streets, and gain
The upper room, that kernel of the Church.
And lo! they hear the tale they thought to tell:
"The LORD is risen indeed, and hath appeared
To Simon!"

O the joy of joys! O Day
Blest beyond all days! Portal to the sky!
The golden ladder, lifting man to GOD!
And Thou,—what tongue can tell Thy praise?—
what heart,
Bursting in thankfulness, can sing Thy love,
Thou vanquished Victor, Crucified Supreme,
That reign'st, because thou suffered'st! Thou hast
now
Done with those woes for ever: Thou hast left
That glorious *Τετέλεσται* to Thy band
Battling in this world; Thou upon the vault
Of "terrible crystal,"* which the Angels tread,
Stand'st in the midst, the LAMB That hast been slain;

* Ezekiel i. 22.

And see'st the prostrate Elders, and the Four
Mysterious Living Creatures, and the souls
Perfect through suffering, that have reached Thy Land
By the same path Thou trodd'st: and how they strike
Their purest light-harps, and ascribe to Thee
The glory and the wisdom and the might,
The victory and salvation!

Grant me, GOD,
One day, the lowest place beneath their feet!

RUTH.

1860.

RUTH.

I.

He stood on that prophetic height,
The chief of Israel's host,
And cast, inspired of God, his sight
Round Canaan's furthest coast:
Where Spring, like some fair youthful queen,
Decked Jordan's banks with loveliest green,
And, right in Judah's onward road,
The City of the Palm-trees glowed,
And Idumæa's mountains lay
Far in the South, obscurely grey,
To where the purple died away
Upon the Western main:

Where Ephraim's hills in glory shone,
By sea-stormed Carmel, on and on,
Till, crowned with snow-wreaths, Lebanon
  Girt in Sidonia's plain.
Nor less he views each future scene,
Though many a century intervene;
How Judah's holier mount shall own
  The LORD'S elected seat,
And Sion's future towers enthrone
  The footstool of His feet:
—Behold the land thy tribes must win,
But plead thou not to enter in!

II.

Of all the vision, sweet yet faint,
That cheered the warrior and the saint,
What landscape could so brightly shine,
Bethlehem-Ephratah, as thine?
Dear sunny fields,—true "House of bread,"—
  True home of David's race;
Whence Judah's mystic bands are fed
  And whence endued with grace;

Where He His earliest light shall pour,
The Flower of Jesse's rod;
The Wonderful, the Counsellor,
The Everlasting GOD:
Where Israel's tribes shall lift the horn,
And Satan's ranks be riven,
What time to us a Child is born,
To us a Son is given:
Where midnight skies shall sing His birth,
The future LORD of ransomed earth;
Nor *Gloria in Excelsis* cease
From furthest shore to shore
To tell of "peace to men of peace,"
From thenceforth evermore.

III.

O glorious theme! but all too high
For my unskilful minstrelsy:
I rather turn my ruder rhyme
Back to the scenes of earlier time;
Though still we mark the dews that gem
Each leaf and flower of Bethlehem;

Still note the evening's latest tint
Upon her rustic turrets glint;
Though many a sun has yet in turn
To ripen Bethlehem's corn,
And many a summer's course to burn,
Before her LORD is born.
Let others tell how here that Name,
That Blessed Name, was won;
And wreathe a garland for His fame,
The everlasting Son:
To no such strain I tune my string,
No such renown I hail;
I leave them all,—content to sing
A simple village-tale.

IV.

A sky of the deepest and tenderest blue:
A landscape that glistens with May's first dew:
The land of the olive, the land of the vine,
The region that floweth with oil and with wine:
While the pathway, down to the valley, glows
With Hermon's lily, and Sharon's rose:

And, like peaceful squadrons in rank enrolled,
The broad slopes glitter with barley-gold:
What spot upon earth, as the spot where we stand,
Is so like the happy eternal Land?
But *there* is no riving of heart from heart:
There none can sorrow, and none can part:
There sickness is banished, and dried each tear,
And consoled each mourner—'tis not so here!

V.

'Tis not so here—for sad and slow,
With words of doubt, and mien of woe,
Three pilgrims onward stray;
They mark not how, exulting loud,
The lark, from yonder purple cloud,
Salutes the early day:
They reck not how the air is balm,
How nature's very self breathes calm,
And all her tribes are gay:
No! there is hidden grief that lies
Too deep for all her harmonies.

Three pilgrims: one with matron air,
And features worn, yet sadly fair,
And beauty in its calm decay,
As landscape in an autumn day:
And two that to her neck have clung,
Like roses round some firmer stem,
O'er which their gentle leaves have hung,
And which their red buds diadem.
Both lovely as a dream—both dight
In robes of eastern beauty's light:
But she, whose darker ringlets deck
The fair pure brow, and purer neck,
Whose eye is clear and firm and true
As summer heaven of deepest blue,
Whose clinging gesture tells how much
Affection speaks by very touch,—
Go forth and search from East to West
For tenderest eye and snowiest breast,
For mingled loveliness and truth,
And thou shalt find their home in RUTH!
But who that sees them now, would dare
To think that Orpah were less fair?

Less fixed in faith, less firm in hope,
With every toil, for love, to cope?

VI.

Two summer morns alike may break,
And bid the wood's sweet anthems wake;
And one shall mark its sun descend
Unclouded, to his glorious end,
And one shall see the whirlwind rise,
And storm and gloom enshroud its skies.
Two summer larks alike may spring,
At daybreak, on their upward wing;
And this at eve shall carol loud
Beneath her canopy of cloud,
And that, before the west is grey,
Shall flutter as the fowler's prey.
Two rosebuds shall alike be seen
To burst their shrine of emerald green;
And one shall shed its life-long breath
In sweetness, and be sweet in death;
And one, ere yet 'tis fully burst,
With mildew and with blight be curst.

And so these twain:—this hour shall view
Which is the feigned and which the true.

VII.

With her fair sad face, and her matron grace,
She spake to her daughters twain;
And her glance was cast to the days that were past,
And could never return again:
To the loved ones that lie 'neath an alien sky,
And moulder in heathen clay;
And never shall stand in the LORD'S own land
Till the Resurrection Day.

VIII.

"O happy hours, while yet of old
The GOD of Jacob watched His fold,
While yours, mine own, it was to bless
With love and careful tenderness:
And though remembering, day by day,
The LORD'S own mansion, far away,
And mindful, at each evening's rise,
Of Shiloh's holy Sacrifice,—

Still had I hoped one day to tread,
With you and with the holy dead,
To you unknown, but dear to them,
The quiet fields of Bethlehem.
That hope is past: and though my heart
Half breaks to say it, we must part:
'Tis the Most High that wills it—No!
Cling not to me, sweet daughters, so!
I have no sons, my joy and pride,
Henceforth to claim in each their bride;
I have no hope, in sinking age
To find a home for heritage.
Turn, then, and seek your native shore;
Turn to your people's shrine once more:
And, wheresoe'er your lot be thrown,
The GOD we trust in guard His own!
And give you some one day to prove
His best and holiest treasure, love;
And infants that shall yet be pressed
With mother's rapture to the breast:
And so His aid be by you felt,
His shield around you spread,

As, in the former days, ye dealt
With me, and with the dead!"

IX.

O Orpah, dost thou hide thy face,
And canst thou bear to sever?
And hast thou heart for that embrace
Which says farewell for ever?
—Thou, in Whose Hand is earthly bliss,
Oh give me any woe but this!
That where I lean with every power
Of faith and love and trust,
I ever should endure the hour
That crushes all to dust!
Take those I love, if so Thy will,
And I may love them dearlier still:
They pass but for a while away,
They dwell at home with Thee;—
And I shall go to them, tho' they
Shall not return to me:
But thus to lose the faith of years,—
'Tis grief that lies too deep for tears:

'Tis gloom, whence hope no ray can borrow:
'Tis night that cannot look for morrow.
Once more I pray:- an Orpah's kiss,—
O give me any woe but this!

X.

What time the storm was black as night,
And rain was driving fast,
And gulfs of cloud, from height to height,
Were tossed before the blast:
Hast thou not seen the rainbow-arch
From North to South serenely march,
And heard its own consoling cheer,
'Be of good comfort! God is here!'
So as they stood beside the palm
Where Orpah bade farewell,
Those accents full of love and calm
Upon the silence fell:
"Whate'er of weal, whate'er of woe,
Beset thy future way,
Whither thou goest, I will go,
And where thou stayest, stay:

Where'er thou shalt have bowed the knee,
Whatever path have trod,
Thy people shall my people be,
Thy GOD shall be my GOD:
And when that darkest hour draws nigh,
Yet be not thou afraid:
For where thou diest, I will die,
And there will I be laid:
And GOD do so and more to me,
If aught but death part me and thee!"

XI.

Three thousand years have passed away
Since first those words were spoken,
And still, as on that very day,
Their spell remains unbroken:
The exile on an alien shore
Drinks in their high devotion,
The home-wrapped seaman cons them o'er
Upon the Atlantic Ocean:
The soldier grasps them for his shield
Before the sign of battle;

They whisper comfort in the field
  Above the cannon's rattle:
Watchword of woman's love, that still
Will mock at space, and smile at ill:
That, when the clouds close darkest round,
  Will only shine the brighter;
That, when the rest are faithless found,
  Will only cling the tighter:
'The LORD do so and more to me,
If aught but death part me and thee!'

XII.

*Thou art praised in Sion, O GOD of Hosts!
  And to Thee they perform the vow,
When they go to worship in Salem's coasts,
  And before Thine Altar bow:
Thou visitest earth with a glorious birth;
  Thou makest it plenteous indeed;
And the River of GOD shall fatten the sod,
  For so Thou preparest the seed:

* See Psalm lxv.

Thou waterest her furrows, Thou droppest the grain
Into every little vale;
And Thou makest it soft with the drops of rain,
Nor lettest the increase fail:
Thou crownest the year with Thy goodness here,
And Thy clouds drop fatness still:
They shall comfort and bless the wilderness,
And gladden each little hill:
—The folds shall be full of sheep!
The valleys so thick with corn,
That for very joy they shall laugh and leap,
When Thou liftest Thy people's horn!

XIII.

So from the break of early day,
Until the night grew dim,
In Ephratah, while all was gay,
Went on the harvest hymn:
But thou in harvest joy to share,
Poor wanderer! hast but little care!
—She hastened forth from Bethlehem
With all a Mother's pride,

Content the world's wild waves to stem,
  Her husband at her side:
Now she returns in life's decay,
Youth's brightest dreams dissolved away:
Her footsteps, like an alien's, roam
Round that which once she called her home:
And, but for this dear treasure, now
Hers by affection and by vow,
As lonely midst her own she stands,
As shipwrecked man on stranger sands.
'O call me not Naomi,—GOD
  Hath changed my former name!
And for the Crown He sends the rod,
  And for the glory, shame:
Yet to His Will content to bow,—
My title must be Mara now!'

XIV.

I marvel not that poets teach
  Of that fair golden time,
When heart was pure, when thought was speech,
  When heart was in her prime.

And so I deem, as I behold
Where Bethlehem's harvest waves in gold,
And see the lord of all the land
Come forth amidst his reaper band,
With gentle mien and kindly air,
As if an equal part they bare,
—The master in the servants' toil,
The servants in the master's spoil.
"The LORD be with thee!"—O sweet token
Of love to GOD and man unbroken!
O glorious words, which not alone
  Shall Bethlehem's hills repeat,
But after years, from zone to zone,
Shall echo at the LORD'S own Throne
  In many a cadence sweet:
What time the vast Cathedral pile,
From vaulted Nave and fretted Aisle,
  Shall, all in answer meet,
"And with thy spirit!" make reply,
In that full choral harmony!

XV.

But one there is, of stranger mien,
Who dares in those sweet fields to glean,
Where none may grudge, and none upbraids,
Amidst the ranks of Israel's maids;
Although the fierce sun, flaming down,
Hath tinged her cheek with darker brown,
Although with unaccustomed toil
She gather in the reaper's spoil,
Deem not her task unblessed above—
She toils in faith, and works for love.
"Hearken, my daughter! Seek not now
In other fields to stray,
But by my maidens tarry thou,
And in my harvest stay:
And at their fountain cool thy lip,
And in their cup thy morsel dip:
Have I not charged them, that they be
As though they shared one home with thee?"

XVI.

—Oh, in this world, that turns its sight

To darkness rather than to light,
And, in its course embruted,
That loves to brand the pure and bright
As faithless and polluted;
The very worst suspecting still,
And out of good inventing ill;
In this poor judgment-seat of dust,
How great a thing is holy trust!
—The merry harvest feast is past;
The harvest pipe is hushed at last;
In scattered farm and distant cot
Of many a wild and hill-side spot,
The reapers, while in silence dim
The moon her bright watch keepeth,
Once more commend themselves to Him,
Who slumbereth not nor sleepeth.
But Boaz,—*he* must be secure
Whose willing hand hath fed the poor,—
But Boaz lays him down to rest,
Where are the barn sheaves closeliest prest.
When the LORD'S banner is unfurled,
And crushed are death and sin,

Thus, in the harvest of the world,
He shall be garnered in!

XVII.

Oh blame her not! she comes impressed
By Israel's law in clear behest:
Directed by the lore of age
To claim her wifely heritage:
As pure as Angels in the sky,
As safe as in a sanctuary.
The heaven is calm, the night is dark:
That barn-floor is her holy ark:
He sleeps the good man's slumber sweet;
She crouches stilly at his feet:
And guardian Angels watch above,
With looks of joy and thoughts of love:
They see, in prophet-vision clear,
The future scenes that shall be there:
The Babe that comes our woes to heal,
And make our bitter sweet:
The Virgin Mother that shall kneel
And worship at His Feet:

Though Israel may reject her LORD,
The ox and ass shall know
The Prince, for evermore adored,
Who comes to dwell below:
And hither shall the wise men bring
Their offerings three, to own
The GOD, the Mortal, and the King,
Who reigns from Sion's throne!
When shall the promised time appear,
That this shall be, and this be *here?*
That promised time and King they see,
And trace His line, sweet Ruth, to thee!

XVIII.

Why should I tell how midnight rest
With holy, plighted troth was blest?
Why should I tell, at Bethlehem's gate
How Bethlehem's chosen elders wait,
And call the GOD Who rules the sky
The sacred bond to ratify?
How she, the alien one, who chose
In Israel's land to find repose,

Her home, her kin, her gods forsaken,
From Israel's GOD hath guerdon taken?
And therefore is her name enrolled
In that celestial page,
Which, writ in characters of gold,
Shall live from age to age:
And therefore doth her story shine,
Unspotted, in Messiah's line;
And she hath won the endless fame
That from her heathen-root He came.
And so, amidst a world of strife,
She speaks the words of hope and life:
'If thou art called to toil for truth,
Yet be not thou afraid;
But think upon the GOD of Ruth,
And He shall give thee aid!'

KING JOSIAH.

1862.

KING JOSIAH.

WHO, with apparel stained of crimson hue,
—Like one that treads the winefat, or as chief
Returning victor from the field of blood—
Comes softly thro' the woodland?—Who but HE,
The GOD of Autumn, guarding plighted troth,
Troth, then first plighted when He stretched the bow
From Ararat to Elbrouz, "while earth lasts,
Seedtime and harvest, day and night, shall be"?—
He speaks the word: and leafy chapels, late
Rich with the music of a thousand songs,
Green shrines, where nightingales from eve till morn
Poured antiphonal joy, and loftier Aisles,
Sweet with the wild doves' gurgling note of love,

Assume the sunset of the year. The elm
Dissolves in golden showers: the maple sends
A flock of red leaves, like the rainbow-birds
Of tropic forests, wandering through the air;
And the brave oak tears off his purpler vest.
"GOD made not death:" and autumn had no rule
In His first Paradise, nor shall have place
In that, the better Paradise, which One,
On the dim evening of a stormy day,
With dying lips foretold to dying ears,
Saying, "To-day shalt thou be with Me there."

Yes: Autumn is of Earth: and Earth hath too
An Autumn of the nations. Then the sap
Which, in its young wild life, joined land to land,
Turned forests into cities, made the sea
White with a thousand sails, sent lion-hearts
To found new empires, making glad the waste
With woman's love and beauty, children's smiles,
And man's brave honest toil, and all that bids
The sad and solitary land rejoice,
Dies at its very fountain. Then strong arms

Falter and tremble: then strong hearts grow faint:—
And efforts dwarf and dwindle, and the night
Cometh when none can work. So nations' years
Draw to the mournful autumn of their close;
And such an autumn knows no second spring.

So Israel's autumn now; as shortening days,
And rising winds, and gathering clouds, proclaim.
Yet, as in Western forests, ere the snow
Wraps the whole earth in Winter's bridal veil,
Ere nature's pulses cease, ere yet the wolf
Wakes the gaunt echoes of the leafless trees,
The Indian knows of gentler gales,—of flowers
Decked in half-vernal beauty,—knows of skies
Cloudless, or flecked with soft-winged specks, that drop
Their playful shadows where the warm wind breathes,
—And all the more presages that the end,
The dead year's winding-sheet, is therefore nigh:
Or, as when hectic's deadly rose hath burnt
Some maiden cheek,—and kindled up the eye
To deeper beauty, while each waning day

Gives troth more earnest to the last great Foe;
And they, the hopeless watchers, know her lot
No other bridal chamber than the grave:
Perchance, in that last conflict, nature wakes
Her utmost efforts, and, a moment, Life
Winning her last, last field, keeps Death at bay:
Yet not the less, poor Mother, dost thou see
The glazing eye, damp brow, and all that makes
The laying down the flesh so hard, at hand:—
So Israel trod the last steep steps of death.

A helpless, hopeless struggle thine, O King,
Last *very* King of Judah! Yet not less
I deem that chief's a glorious part, who now,
Outnumbered, outmanœuvred, sure of fate,
While arm can strike, or heart can beat, fights on.
Nor less the pilot's, who, when utmost skill
Hath done its part, and done its part in vain,
With mainmast by the board, and bulwarks gone,
And boats swept off, while right ahead, the deep
Churns, on the jaws of some near reef, its foam,
Stands by the helm, and faithful to the last,

Rules the devoted vessel. Them, if not
The meed of man, the Crown of GOD, awaits.

Wherefore let GOD's great temple, that dear House
Of Israel's praises, raise its head once more!
Once more with trumpet peal, and gentler lute,
And dulcimer and psaltery, pour the strain
Over the thousand victims! Let the Priests,
The sons of Aaron, in their courses wait:
And choose ye out the Lamb, and strike the blood
On lintel and on doorpost, while the tale
Of Israel's great salvation passes round:
And eat with girded loins, and staff in hand,
And bitter herbs: while orphan lips* rehearse
The glories of that Red Sea march, and tell
Of horse and rider thrown into the sea:
And let the great shout rise—"For He is good,
His Mercy is for ever,"—echoed back

* It is well known that a portion of the Passover Service, according to the Jewish tradition, was necessarily said by an orphan; to which our LORD's words, "I will not leave *you* orphans," spoken on that same Passover night, have probably reference.

From Sion to Mount Olivet, and o'er
The Hill of Evil Counsel. There are ears
Now drinking in this jubilance of praise,
That, pass how short a space! shall hear the roar
Of flame-cones shooting high above those towers;
The wild Chaldean yell,—the groan of death,
The sob of mortal anguish, and the shriek
Of maiden's last despair. And eyes which now
Behold the goodly cohort, that arrayed
In linen vest and ephod, as one man,
Pour from a thousand trumpets GOD'S great praise,—
Those eyes shall see the marble halls enwrapped
In smoke and fire, while streams of molten gold
Run down the glorious pavement, and the air
In far-off vales and palmgroves breathes the scent
Of cedar roofs consuming. But not yet:
While Judah's monarch lives, her life is charmed:
So spake, by woman's voice, the LORD of Hosts:
"Thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace,
And shalt not see the evil." So the Feast
Was Queen of all past Festals:—and the King,
If hopeless of his country's future, still

Goes forth to wreak GOD'S vengeance on the shrines
That thus have wrought her ruin.

Aye, strike on!
Still in thine ear those curses ring,—still glare
Those letters in thine eyes: "If thou shalt turn
To such foul gods of wood and stone, the fear
Of those devoted nations, then accursed
In city art thou, and in field accursed:
Accursed in going out and coming in:
Accursed in basket and in store: Accursed
In fruit of body, and in fruit of land;
In increase of thy kine and of thy sheep:
Then shall the plague, the THING* that walks by night,
Stalk through thy dwelling: then consumption seize
The flower of all thine offspring: then the LORD
Shall smite thee with the mildew and the blight,
The blasting, and the burning, and the scab:
Then shall the heaven above thee turn to brass,
The earth beneath be iron. Thou shalt grope
At noonday in the darkness that is felt:

* *Vulg.* Psalm xc. 6. A *negotio* perambulante in tenebris.

Thou shalt betroth a bride in all her youth
And all her beauty; and her beauty' and youth
Others shall rifle. So shalt thou become
A byeword and a hissing and a curse:
One way shalt thou go forth against thy foes;
Ten ways shalt flee before them."
So he stands
Amid that cypress grove, where autumn suns
Diffuse a mournful splendour: where they lie
Who passed away—I say not, fell asleep—
In worship of the hate of Israel's GOD.

—Thou seest yon forest where the great oaks cast
Their broken and fantastic shades athwart
The greensward glades, where, but for them, the sun
Had ploughed his golden furrows on the lea?—
Yes; they have seen, since that great day of wrath,
Four centuries of foliage. Then he came,
The Prophet of the Living GOD,—he told
GOD's vengeance on the Altar and the King.
Oh wise for others! madman for himself!
He ventured on the Martyr's path: he saw

The Monarch's hand outstretched: he saw it struck
And palsied in the very act of sin:
Then rose his prayer like incense to the skies,
And so the sin was pardoned. Yet not less
Himself was faithless,—yet not less himself
Obeyed an alien teacher. So he left
A monument to other years of sin
So hardly punished, that, in future days,
GOD's Prophet may obey the LORD he tells:
GOD's Seer may be GOD's Saint.

Now 'midst the tombs
Under the cypress trees,—those mossy stones
Grey with the lichens of four hundred years,
He rests, rests well at last. "Let him alone:
Let no man move his bones." The heavy guilt
Hath heavily been punished: he shall now
Stand forth the safeguard of the treacherous friend,
And lured by him to death, preserve in death.
Nor doubt that, by a short rough path, he went
To happier fields: "no lion shall be there;
Nor any evil beast go up thereon."

And will not all avail? The tears, the prayers,
The rendering back its beauty to GOD's shrine,
The casting down of idols? Shall not this
Plead for the guilt of many a year of sin?—
No more than all the tears of autumn-dew
Can call back spring's poor flowers: no more than gales
Rich with September-fragrance, can awake
May's fresh green foliage on the forest bough.
"There is a sin to death:" there is a time
When GOD shuts up the future: leaving there
A certain looking for of fiery wrath.
Woe, woe for him that hangs about the gate,
Which entered, hope departs! And yet despite
Of warning and of mercy, spite of all
That his good Angel, in mysterious way,
Whispers in those dim chambers of the heart,
In spite of utmost danger, man sins on.
Thou, glorious King of Judah, thou shalt save
Thyself before the ruin: thou shalt find
Before the ship goes down, a blessed port:
But Israel's doom was fixed, what time she shed

The blood of all those Martyr-seers, what time
There stood an idol in the house of GOD:*
Some stoned, some sawn asunder, some with sword
Sent to their glory: they of whom the world
Was not found worthy: they who wandered, clad
In sheepskins and in goatskins, far and wide,
Tormented and afflict and destitute:
And chiefly him, the eagle-seer, who soared
So far above things earthly—who proclaimed
"A Virgin shall conceive and bear the SON;"
The Monarch That should reign, but reign by death,
Should be rejected and despised of men,
Afflicted, and deserted, and contemned:
Who saw the goodly Land, to which That King
Should call His followers, in His time, to share
The many mansions of His Father's House.
"The sun shall be no more thy light by day,
Neither for brightness shall the moon," he cried;
"The LORD shall be Thine everlasting light,
And all thy mourning days have found their end."
That blood calls still, calls bitterly: the years

* 2 Kings, xxi. 7.

Of idol-worship, join their cry to that.
Look backward to the glory of that day,
When gold and gems, and utmost heart conjoined
Built up that glorious temple. Step by step,
Conquest on conquest, loss by loss, it fell.

Oh manifold oblations—threefold feasts
That drew all Israel, whether Paschal Lamb
Called them—or when they kept the Festal "Weeks,"
Or sojourned under tents! These all must cease;
Must cease—and they shall sit by other streams,
And sing the LORD'S song in an alien land.
May they not plead on high?—those glorious Kings,
True both in act and suffering,—from the day
When Zephathah saw Ethiopian hosts
In numbers numberless, o'erwhelmed;—and when,
Far in the wilderness, the rising sun
Turned into crimson every newborn spring;—
And when the Assyrian host, arrayed about
The battlements of Sion, vaunted high
"Where is the King of Eden? where the King
Of Hena and of Ivah? Have their gods

Delivered Judah's people from my hands?"
And when,—oh wonder not on earth alone,
But reaching to the Heavens! the sun went back,
And every planet heard His voice, Who rules
Arcturus and the Pleiades, and girds
Peerless Orion with his golden belt:
And ten degrees were added to the world,
And all its cares and joys and woes;—and when
The Angel of the LORD went out by night,
A gloomy night, when mist enwrapped the earth
As with its funeral pall, and midst the tents
That girded Salem, sent, in one same hour,
One hundred fourscore thousand to their doom:
—May not these Saints now plead on high? Themselves
They have delivered: they have gained the seat
On the right hand of mercy: they shall quaff
The river of His pleasures evermore:
But none can save his brother; none can make
Agreement unto GOD for him: it cost
More to redeem their souls: and he must needs
Let that alone for ever.

Who is this
That, entering from the Northern Gate, rides on
Adown the hill of David? This is he,
Envoy of Israel's ancient foe,—to claim
Freedom of passage over Israel's realm.
O hapless people, own the voice of GOD!
Hear it, O Son of David! Now the ship
Is driven into the "place where two seas meet:"
On this side and on that the high, high waves
Would dash thy little bark to pieces. Now
Own thou the word of GOD, albeit proclaimed
From lips unused to speak it. He, who once
Said, "Israel's GOD I know not, nor will let
The tribes of Israel's GOD go free,"—he now,
(In generations long adown the line,
The golden line of thousand years,) demands
Like passage here GOD's children asked for there.

Woe! when amidst the darkness of the mine,
Long toiled for, hoped for long, the glorious gem
Gladdens the heart, and flashes on the eyes
Of them whose strong right arms with eager toil

Have delved to gain it—if perchance that gem
Priceless, except one flaw, by that one flaw,
Weighed in the scales, is robbed of half its worth
Thou think'st, O King of Judah! that to thee
And thee alone, GOD speaks; but know thou this:
GOD by an alien voice can teach His law
True, as by holiest prophets. Thou wouldst keep
His land by alien footsteps undefiled.
But what if this thy trial? what if this
The lesson that thou, learning, might'st redeem
So many a lesson by thy tribes unlearned?
Oh if thou wouldst but hear him! Oh if now,
Thou, even thou, at least in this thy day,
Wouldst listen to the things that touch thy peace!
—It may not be; the sentence had gone forth:
The sentence then enrolled, what time the cry
Went up from earth to heaven, of all the blood,
The martyr-blood, of them that died for Him,
"Which the LORD would not pardon."*

Go then forth,
Go, King of Judah, battle with thy GOD!

* 2 Kings xxiv. 4.

Thou, who so long hast fought the glorious fight,
Run the true race so long, and kept the faith,—
And must thou turn astray at last? He speaks—
Hear it, or hear it not,—from GOD'S Own Mouth.

O fearful balance! Israel's scales are poised;
Their sins on this side, GOD'S dear love on that:
And TEKEL is the verdict.
Therefore now,
GOD'S Own elected Jewel, to the fight!
Thou shalt be His when He makes up His own,
Safe in the golden shrine wherein the true
And brave ones are His own predestinate:
But dream thou not of earthly victories won;
Of Alleluias which shall echo back
From every hill round Salem. Thou hast once
Offered the holiest Passover of all;
Now shalt thou be the victim. Forth he went
In his own strength, O Sion, to the fight:
Now he returns in other guise: the hand
That held so late the royal sceptre, touched
And withered by the grave. Now GOD'S Own House

Hath seen its latest glories. Triumph now,
O Judah's earliest, Judah's latest Foe!
This is the last of reckonings up: this hour
Takes the long line of Judah's ancient kings,
Weighs in the balances, and finds them fail.

Woe, woe for these! Joy, joy for him! For them
That struggle still amidst the storm, that yet
Strive hard amidst the battle, almost whelmed
Amidst the peril of its eddies, woe!
Woe to the men that shall behold the house,—
"The beautiful and holy house," enwrapped
In Babylonian fire!
But joy to him,
So early called to fight, so soon to peace!
Who would not gladly gird his armour on,
If, wearing it a moment, he might hang
That armour forthwith in the hall of Rest?
The fight he fought, the toils he bore, are ours;
Like his, our idols also; hand to hand
With them our warfare; only now no more
The battle-field is visible: 'tis deep

In the recesses of the inmost heart;
"The good I would I do not"—there the strife—
"The evil that I would not that I do."

And Judah's Monarch won the truer crown;
But won it by his death. And how shall we,
GOD's own elected Israel, triumph now,
Till when, in that last battle with the Foe,
Egypt then crushed for ever, we shall fall?

THE

SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA.

1863.

THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA.

Aye, let them wreak the deadliest of their hate
Upon the Lord's Elected! Let them speed,
Far as the Empire spreads her giant arms,
The bolt of persecution; gird their loins
For battle with the Lord and with his Christ;
And test the strength of agony by hope,
Of faith by torture; setting present shame
Against the exceeding and eternal Crown:
And learn how Love counts this her deepest joy,
To match herself with Death; joy doubly dear
When Death comes armed in doubly hideous form.
—I see them pass—O bright palmiferous band
That none can number!—all arrayed as fits

The King's triumphant warriors, who came out
Of mighty tribulation, but are now
Clad in the white robes of eternal peace:
—I see them pass, the Crown upon their head,
To join the everlasting marriage-feast:
Old men, who only grieved that life in them
Was but so poor a thing to fling away:
Soldiers, once vowed to Cæsar's Throne, now bound
By Military Sacrament to One
Greater than Cæsar: maidens that till then
Had known no ruder visiting of touch
Than mother's gentle arm, or sister's kiss;
But, in an ecstasy of joy, shall now
Find, in the rack's long terrible embrace,
Their truer bridal. These are they that stood
Firm in the Colosseum, when the cry
"The Christians to the Lions!" rose to Heaven:
That gave their bodies to the flame, but not
Their souls to idols: mothers that endured
To see their little ones' most tender life
Ebbing away beneath the scourge, and shed
No tear, but rather urged them to the fight.

Well borne the darkness and the tempest!—He,
His People's Leader, in His own dear Voice
To every soul that agonised for Him
Shall speak of Winter over, raindrops passed,
And the sweet Turtle's song of endless peace.
'Arise, My love, My fair one! come away!'

An Easter morn on Patmos! All around
The bluely-trembling sea smiles countlessly;
While splintery peak and crag go towering up,
Height above height, where soft and tender clouds
Nestle, as Beauty clings to Valour's breast.
—But what to him, most loving and most loved
Of all the King's Apostles, is the light
That flickers on the heaving wave—the sail
That like a snowy sea-bird flashes out,
Then tacks again to darkness? There he stands
Upon the wild sea-shore, and sends his thoughts
Back to the Day of days, when first they came
Breathless with haste and ecstasied with joy:
'The LORD is risen indeed!' And so it dawned,
The glorious spring-day of a ransomed earth.

He sees the Garden by the Sacred Rock,
He breathes its very incense; even now
Its Palms make music to him; he beholds
The Napkin that had touched the Glorious Head
Folded apart: the Grave clothes, (useless now,
Since Death by death is swallowed up of Life,)
Laid by themselves:—he listens to the bray
Of trumpet and of cymbal, that floats on
From Sion's hill, where Priest and people keep
The Paschal Feast, not knowing that the Lamb,
The great Oblation of the earth, is slain,
Slain by their hands but three short days agone:
And still he stands and muses.

Oh how near
We tread the confines of the spirit-world!
How thin the veil that hides it! Who but feels
Sometime, in night's dim silence and dead noon,
Conscious that those we deem so far are near,
The lost are present? Who that has not heard
Of strange mysterious warnings, or perchance
The work of Guardian Angel, or belike

Of friend who, having loved us, loves us still,
And who, now free, would guard us, captives yet?
—Who has not felt, in hour of need or woe,
Illapses more than earthly?—This be sure:
That when we solve—GOD grant we solve it well!—
That last and greatest riddle, when our eyes
Begin to open on the spirit-land,
Then we shall learn how mixed and intertwined
Thro' all our course, has been that land with this.
—Who that has then stood ministering, and watched
The strange on-coming of that fearful Thing
Whose viewless presence fills the room, and makes
Him that had never seen its advent yet,
Say, as by some new instinct,—This is Death!—
Who that has, awe-struck, marked the dying eye
Follow through vacancy some form no sight
Of living man could reach, but feels—'He now
Is on the very point of making out
The terrible enigma,—he is now
Half in the world where flesh and blood come not.'

—Earth and earth's scenes have vanished! Boundless sea

And royal coronet of clouds, that hang
Above the eternal mountain,—where are they?
And Who is here?
He here, the First and Last;
The Alpha and Omega; the Amen;
The Faithful and True Witness. Not as erst
He stood in that tremendous hour of shame,
(O loving hour for man!) or when He trod
The *Via Dolorosa*, summing up
The bitterness of all that suffering Life
In the most conquering Passion of His Death.
—Intense in brightness stands He: in His hand
The Sevenfold coronet of stars; the Lamp,
The Sevenfold golden Lamp is by His side:
He comes to walk amidst His sevenfold Church,
And speak her Angels' sentence: *so* to speak
That Mercy yet give season to amend;
To strengthen what is wanting; to confirm
That which as yet is stable. Not as then,
When in the darkness and the cloud, amidst
Adoring bands of Angels, He shall sit,
The final Arbiter of human things;

And the Archangel's trumpet voice proclaim
That time shall be no longer. Then no place
For late repentance: no oblation then
Of prayers, or tears, or almsdeeds shall avail:
When all the kindreds of the earth shall mourn,
And the Elect lift up with joy their heads.
—But not as yet that Advent: now He comes
With mercy tempering justice: comes to cheer
His champions to the fight; with loving words
To warn the self-deceivers; to inspire
Fresh courage in the faint, and bid the strong
Press bravelier onward to the heavenly crown.

Stand forth, and hear the sentence of Thy LORD,
City of Temples, Asia's Primate Church!
'I know thy works, thy patience, and thy faith:
Thy hatred to the evil: thou hast borne,
And for My Name's sake laboured, fainting not.
But this I have against thee; thou hast left
Thy earliest love, the kindness of thy youth,
The love of thine espousal-tide.* Repent:

* Jeremiah ii. 2.

Or know, thy candlestick shall be removed,
And darkness settle round and gird thee in.'

Ah me! I look adown the line of years,
But that first love returns not! Still she stands
Firm to the truth, and faithful to her LORD:
Proclaims, as with a voice of thunder,* how
He, of a truth, Incarnate for our sake,
Is consubstantial with Humanity:
But grievous wolves and ravening enter in:†
And Grace decays, and Love grows weak, until
The accursed Crescent towers above the Cross;
And all her Martyrs' blood, and all the toil
And faith of her Confessors, end in this;—
The Angel of the Church long leagues away,
Priests fled, and Altars overthrown, and scarce
Two mouldering huts that name the Name of
CHRIST!

* Reference is made to the Council of Ephesus: the Third Œcumenical, in which the Nestorian heresy was finally condemned.

† Acts xx. 29.

O what a sevenfold flood of glory pours*
In each succeeding promise, brightening still
And kindling in intenseness to the close,
"To him that overcometh!" He shall eat,
Eat of the Tree of Life; not that which erst
Bloomed in the earthly Paradise, whereof
Man ate not through GOD's love; lest, if he ate,
He in this mortal world should live for aye:
But that abiding, that enduring Life,
Life of the Blessed, Life of GOD Himself;
Life whence the Fountain of all good things springs,
The Beatific Vision!—Into that,
The lost and lovely Eden, Death came in:
But now no fear of death deflowers their joy,
No pining malady, no bloodless age;
Yea, "he that overcometh shall not be
Hurt of the second Death." He treads not now
The waste and howling wilderness of earth;
As erst they trod, around whose tent, each morn,
Angelic food descended with the dew:

* In the following lines, the seven blessings "To him that overcometh" are taken in the connection which the best Commentators, and more especially, of late, the Dean of Westminster, have seen in them.

Yet hath he heavenly Manna, while he sits
At that high Banquet, where the Victors rest;
And tell how, 'neath their Chief's protecting Arm,
They went from strength to strength. For war is o'er:
The iron sceptre in the LORD'S Right Hand
Hath dashed the Foe in pieces; with the Chief
The followers conquer; their long trial past,
Their carnal battles over.—Is there yet
A higher bliss for them that overcome?
"Him will I make a pillar in GOD'S shrine:
He shall no more go out." O Joy of joys!
O blest necessity of sinlessness!*
And ask ye more than this? Then hear the close.
"To him that overcometh will I give
To sit with Me upon My Throne, as I,
The Agony endured, the Crown put on,
Sat down upon the Eternal Father's Throne."
—O glorious Rainbow, decked with sevenfold hues!
O perfect Octave of Eternal Bliss!

* Reference is made to the *Beata necessitas non peccandi* of the Schoolmen.

What sweetest strain of music floats adown
The eternal mountain? Passing sweet, as though
'Twere some faint echo of the notes they hymn,
The "harpers harping, with their harps," who bow
Before the golden Throne: yet passing sad,
As though a heart-wreck centred in each note?
—I know thy poverty (but thou art rich)
Thou Church whose name is Myrrh!*—The incense needs
Must feel the fire, or ere its sweetness lifts
Her trailing cloud of beauty through the air:
The violet trodden under foot gives out
A more than double fragrance: and the string
Racked to the full sends forth its sweetest sound.
—Well to that glorious Angel† rings that note,
Keynote of persecution! "In the world
Ye shall have tribulation." O how fierce
The assault of Satan on that spotless Church!
'Be faithful to the death, and I will give
The Crown of Life!'—And lo! I view the scene,

* Smyrna the same as Myrrha; see Dean Trench.
† S. Polycarp.

Where he, who bare in very deed much fruit,
Stands forth, the athlete in the glorious strife;
Stands forth, the whilst they raise the pile; and marks,
Serene, the wood reared up, the fire prepared,
And knows himself the Victim. And he speaks:
"Fourscore and six years have I served this LORD,
And found a loving Master;—shall I now
Deny His Service?"—And himself the while,
Amidst the flame, as gold refined, is tried:
And tried, is proved: and proved, receives the Crown.

O twin and loving Sisters! faultless both,
Judged by those searching eyes! And Smyrna still,
And Philadelphia, clinging to the faith,
Inherit that same promise: they are kept
Because they kept the word of patience, firm
Amidst encircling weakness: pillars they
Amongst surrounding ruin.—O pledged word
Of GOD'S Eternal Truth! Nor deem thou these
Sole witnesses of faith from age to age;
But rather think how each succeeding day,
Since the first hour He tabernacled here,

Hath blazoned forth His Truth, hath taught the weak
To lean on Him the Mighty; dropped in Balm
Assuaging myriad wounds: but only thus:
As those elected Five amid the Seven,*
By struggle or with self or with the Foe.

And thou, too, dweller hard by Satan's throne,
Thou hast thine offering ready:—not as those,
When in the marble court the Priests stood ranged,
With trumpet and with clarion: and the flame
Leapt high and flickering,—and the assembled tribes
Fell down and worshipped: other gift is thine:
One dear oblation, but that one worth all
The Synagogue could offer: one that stood
Single, against a multitude of foes,
Valiant, amidst fierce taunts of coward ranks,
Constant, amidst a host of unbelief.
O Faithful and True Witness! he was then
Witness for Thee, and champion of Thy rights:

* It is to be noticed that only Sardis and Laodicea, of all the Seven Churches, have no internal heresy nor outward attack against which they are warned.

Therefore his lot is with the sons of GOD,
His Portion with the Saints.—Nor he thy one
And only boast, O Pergamum! That day,
When kingly Rhone shall see his banks girt in
With struggling crowds, and all along the shore
The Lictors, and the Eagle, and the Priests,
And legionary soldiers follow on
In long procession, and the curule chair
Receives the fierce Proconsul; there they stand,
Those Martyrs of Lugdunum, spurning back
The offered incense: slave they stand, and Priest,
Bishop and soldier, ready for the war,
And strong in CHRIST'S own strength: while devilish art
Searches each sense and avenue of life;
And scourge and rack and pincer join with flame
To torture nerve and sinew;—them amidst
A Pergamene shall hold no hindmost place.
'Call *us* not,' say they, 'Martyrs: there is One,
And One alone True Martyr: we are His
—Not Martyrs, but poor servants,—rendering back
The life He gave us first and then redeemed.'

Wake, Thyatira, rouse thee! Take in hand
The SPIRIT'S sword and smite the accursed sect;
Them who deny that in this very flesh
The LORD was born and died: and thence deny
That flesh thus made GOD'S temple, needs must now
Be, as His SPIRIT, holy. This their boast;
To know "*the depths of Satan:*" to give up
The body to each vile dishonouring lust;
The while the soul, in some serener height,
Sits unpolluted, mistress of her peace,
And combats pleasure's self with pleasure's arms.
'This is the glorious triumph,'—such their lore,—
'Not by hard toil to keep that body down
'Like some chained prisoner; not to wage the war
'Immortal against mortal: but to plunge
'Headlong in fleshly riot, and, by that,
'Mock Satan's power in Satan's own domain.'*
Up, Thyatira! though thy works are more,
—The latter than the former,—persevere;

* The foregoing lines refer to the Gnostic heresy: which, denying the Incarnation, denied also the necessity of the purity of the body.

That which thou hast already, hold thou fast,
Until he come, Whose Coming is thy goal!

Let Sardis stand for judgment; by her side
The city of the murderess queen, whose heights
Look down upon the Lycus.* They alone
No foemen have within, no fear without,
No fire of persecution, no assault
Of ravening heresy. A still deep calm:
Nor dread of ill occurrent. Thus He speaks,
That holds the Seven Spirits, and seven stars:
Angel of Sardis, hear!—'I know thy works:
Thou hast the name of living, and art dead.'
—The fair wind blows; the vessel is in port:
O'er incense-breathing Tmolus, through the vale
Whence, white with swans, Cayster seeks the sea,
The Apostolic missive passes on:—
Forthwith through Sardis spreads the high report,
The LORD That died and rose and lives for aye,
Hath spoken to His faithful here.—At once

* Laodicea, at first Diospolis; then Thoas: at last so-called from Laodice, the wife of Antiochus the II., whom she afterwards murdered.

They crowd His House; expectant that His praise
Will crown that fame the Churches deem their due.
—O woeful, fearful wakening now! "Thou hast
A name that thou art living, but art dead:
Thy works have I found wanting."

And they think
Of that tremendous night, when, midst the glare
Of myriad lamps, the melody of lute,
Of psaltery and of sackbut, while from gold
They quaffed the golden juice of priceless vines,
While glorious roofs were echoing back the laugh,
And storied walls the music; while each charm
That Beauty, reft of Beauty's one true pearl,
Could weave round that infatuate monarch,—still
Madlier the revel, foullier went the jest;
Then in that selfsame hour the ghastly hand,
The spirit-hand, that joined no earthly shape,
Gleamed out so cold upon the wall, above
The glare of lamps and torch: and traced so plain,
In characters that iced their blood who saw,
(Deep horror grew more deep, dead heart more dead)
The fatal TEKEL.—This, O King, thy fate:

Weighed in the balances, and wanting!

Thus
Came fearful awe on Sardis. 'Yet look up,
O remnant that are left! Thou hast a few
That have not stained their garments; they shall walk
With Me in white.—And wilt thou hear His Voice?
—Let the long lines of future years respond.
—When stood'st thou forward in the battle? When
Sent'st thou thy sons to agonise for Him
Thy LORD and Leader?—Oh, the utter wreck
Of those two mouldering shafts that bear thy name!

And thou, companion in her guilt and shame,
And Sister in her sentence,—'I,' thou sayest,
'Am rich and multiplied with goods, and stand
'In need of nought!' Ah me! in need of all,
Since needing Him That should be all in all.
Wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind,
And settling on thy lees: nor cold nor hot.
I counsel thee to buy the gold that comes
Bright from affliction's furnace: raiment white
In that most dearest stream of Calvary's Mount.

Apocalyptic Vision! of whose shrine
This is the Sevenfold Portal! stretching out
From strength to strength, from hope to hope, until
Thou reachest to the pinnacle of bliss:
Thy manifold afflictions end in joy;
Thy manifold attacks in endless peace.
—And is that peace, and is that joy, for me?—

THE END

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